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THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

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THE GENEALOGY OF THE DOME OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL

Paper presented before the Society of Architectural Historians, Boston, Mass., January 29, 1948.

Turpin C. Bannister

The Capitol of the United States is today the best known building in the world. Just as it physically dominates L'Enfant's majestic vistas, it has become a commanding symbol of democratic faith and power. To students of American history in all its phases, it recalls multitudinous associations that intimately illuminate the evolution of our common culture.

For most Americans, the Capitol has suffered the usual fate of familiar things in being taken for granted. It does not deserve such neglect. Surely our appreciation of it needs requickening, for in its form and structure lies not only the energy of a unique work of art, but also a ready key to the understanding of many facets of American architecture. The fact is that few if any nations can claim an architectural focus more distinguished, more beautiful, or more revealing.

Although so renowned a building has won many competent historians, it is the purpose of this paper to explore in fuller detail than has heretofore been possible the conception of its most conspicuous feature, the soaring cast-iron dome which was the masterpiece of its architect, Thomas Ustick Walter.

The original Capitol, planned by Thornton and modified by Latrobe, had finally been completed in 1828 by Charles Bulfinch. Although $2,400,000 had been spent on the construction[1], its limited facilities had soon become inadequate. By 1840 the admission of new states had crowded the legislative halls with fifty senators and 244 representatives, three times the original capacity. Even more serious was the combustible construction of the building, which made wooden beams, trim, and furnishings the easy prey of every flickering candle and roaring fireplace.[2] Latrobe had attempted some fireproof masonry vaulting,[3] but technical difficulties[4] and congressional parsimony[5] had favored timber.

In 1843, William Strickland proposed to relieve congestion and fire hazard by the addition of fireproof wings. He specified cast-iron columns, roofs, and windows.[6] Polk's regime and war with Mexico delayed action. Six years later, in 1849, Vice-President Millard Fillmore revived the project[7], and on May 1, 1850, the famous government architect, Robert Mills, stimulated further consideration by submitting a proposal for adding thirty-two new rooms, "all made fireproof" by shell-thin vaults of brick.[8] Although the Senate Committee recommended Mills' plans,[9] the Senate itself voted a competition.[10] On December 1, four designs were premiated,[11] and from them Mills was directed to synthesize a final scheme.[12] At this juncture Fillmore, who had become president on July 9 after Zachary Taylor's death, refused to recognize the claim of the seventy year old Mills, and on June 11, 1851, appointed one of the prize winners, the Philadelphian, Thomas Ustick Walter, as official "architect of the United States Capitol Extension."[13] Mills' death in 1855 proved the wisdom of the president's decision.

Walter,[14] not yet forty-seven, had already earned an enviable position in his profession. Trained as a master bricklayer under his father and in architectural subjects under Strickland, he had begun independent practice in 1830. From 1833 to 1847 he had built Girard College, one of the most imposing monumental groups in the country. In 1836-37 he had been Professor of Architecture at the Franklin Institute, and in 1838, on business for the Girard Trustees, he had spent five months in England, France, and Italy. From 1843 to 1845 he had designed and built a breakwater at La Guayra, the port of Caracas, Venezuela. In the Capitol competition, he had submitted two designs, and had shared in the awards.[15] He was in vigorous health, deligent, mature, successful, and highly respected. Hardly any other American architect of his day had been so auspiciously prepared for such a commission. Fillmore was amply justified in appointing him architect of the nation's most important building.

Walter arrived in Washington about May 1, 1851, and found the President and Congress eager to lay the cornerstone on July 4th.[16] He brought with him two young assistants, Clem West and Edward Clark, who were not sufficiently experienced to contribute much to the problems at hand.[17] Early in June, however, there appeared on the scene young August Gottlieb Schoenborn, a Thuringian stone mason, who had been trained in architectural drawing and design at the Technical Institute and Art School of Erfurt. Discouraged by political events in Germany in 1849, he had migrated to Wisconsin, but on learning of the Capitol project had immediately come to Washington. He soon became Walter's chief assistant[18] and he continued in employment at the Capitol until his death in January, 1902.

From 1895 to 1898 Schoenborn, then seventy, set down in two memoranda totaling 42 pages his recollections regarding the development of the Capitol. These memoranda are published here for the first time.[19] His succint, self-consistent account inspires full credence and reveals a devoted loyalty that fully explains Walter's comment, "I wish I had a son like him... August is my right hand... he is part of me."[20] In a more formal recommendation given in 1861 Walter wrote, "Schoenborn is the best architectural draughtsman that has ever come under my notice; he has a critical knowledge of the science of architecture, a correct and well cultivated taste in design, a thorough knowledge of geometry and perspective, and a skill in drawing and coloring seldom equalled."[21]

Schoenborn states that: "When I commenced work...in June, 1851, there existed only a plan and elevation on a small scale of the proposed extension, of which the east front was without pediments and which still showed the old wooden dome "[22] No doubt these were the drawings which President Fillmore had approved on June 10, the day before Walter was sworn into office.[23] Only three weeks remained before the scheduled ceremonies on July 4th. Schoenborn's first task was to draw the basement plan of the South Wing, from which the building lines were hurriedly staked out, the excavation begun, and a few foundation courses laid just in time to receive the cornerstone. Daniel Webster's solemn oration made the ritual official.[24]

During the remainder of the year, foundation work proceeded slowly, giving Walter an opportunity to restudy and refine his first design.[25] Since the President was particularly anxious to preserve the integrity of the old building and have the wings touch it as slightly as possible, he took great interest

in the work and often visited Walter's office to follow its progress.[26] In the original plans Walter very definitely intended to finish the interior of the wings to conform exactly with the older work, that is, with white-washed walls, brick floors, timber roofs, plaster ceilings, and wooden trim.[27] More and more, as the work progressed, Walter came to depend on his young German assistant not only for routine tasks but also for the production of original and working drawings.[28]

On December 24 the work was suddenly interrupted when fire, caught from a defective flue, destroyed the old Library of Congress rooms west of the Rotunda. The feeble hand pumps were useless. Schoenborn rushed from his nearby boarding house and helped save some of the books,[29] but 35,000 volumes -- half the collection -- were lost. Many were irreplaceable. One scholar grieved that "any one who may now wish to write a history of our country must now go to the British Museum for his materials."[30] Also consumed were Gilbert Stuart's portraits of the first five presidents. Of the structure itself only the bare walls remained.

Walter was immediately requested to begin plans for reconstruction. The tragedy made an indelible impression on him and he resolved to rebuild so that another such calamity would be impossible. Within a month he submitted his proposal with the notation: "I have considered it an indispensable element in the design... to use no combustible materials in any part of the work; the alcoves, cases, galleries, doors, window shutters, ceilings, and the brackets that support them are all designed to be of cast iron; the shelves for the books (will be) of thick glass or enamelled iron; the framing of the roof of wrought iron; the sheathing of copper, and the floor of stone. In a library thus constructed, fire will be out of the question; and the materials of which it is formed will not be subject to decay or deterioration."[31]

For Walter this was a structural revolution from a masonic past to a metallic future. He had been trained as a mason. His finest creation, Girard College, employed heavy masonry walls and vaults, with little more than the usual amount of metalwork. There was nothing in his past to foretell this extraordinarily thoroughgoing adoption of iron in the Capitol.

Of course in 1851 neither the structural nor ornamental use of iron was a novelty.[32] In Europe ferromania had established itself quite surely from the 1770's, and buildings framed or covered with iron were commonplace by the 1820's. These and later metallic monuments, both European and American, were all well published in the contemporary press. It would be more than remarkable if Walter had not known of them. In 1829-30 the local Philadelphia journals had carried frequent notices describing the progress at Pottsville, Pennsylvania, of John Haviland's Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank, the facade of which was entirely of cast-iron.[33] He must have seen or read of Labrouste's Bibliotheque Sainte-Genevieve, completed in 1850, of Bunning's London Coal Exchange, published in 1849, of New York's Astor Library, under construction since 1849 with many cast-iron fittings, and of James Bogardus' famous cast-iron factory completed in lower Manhattan in 1849. Nevertheless, if he had gleaned such knowledge, his conversion to iron awaited the destruction of the Congressional library.

On March 19 Congress approved Walter's design;[34] on June 21 the contract was let;[35] and on December 1 Walter proudly reported to Secretary Stuart that, "The whole of this immense iron room will have been cast, fitted, and put up in less than six months."[36] Stuart himself enthusiastically informed Congress that, "When completed it will present the first specimen of a room constructed entirely of iron;...that for convenience and beauty of arrangement it will be without a rival...and when we...reflect that it consists of more than ten thousand pieces of an aggregate weight of four hundred tons, and that it was planned in Washington, and executed in New York more than two hundred miles from the hall in which it was to be placed; and when we see that every part of it fits together with the precision of cabinet work, we are at a loss whether to ascribe more honor and praise to the genius and taste of the architect who conceived and marked out the design, or to the skill and fidelity of the contractors who performed the work."[37]

Walter had stated that "as far as my own knowledge goes, it is the first room ever made exclusively of iron."[38] Since he was scrupulously honest, this probably indicates that he either had not heard of Bunning's Coal Exchange or did not consider it in the same category. He most certainly did not know that in Saint Petersburg in 1819-25 Carlo Rossi had built a much larger cast-iron Gothic hall, 100 by 250 feet, to house the Archives of the General Staff of the Imperial Russian Army.[39] Regardless of these inaccuracies, Walter's claim displayed his mounting enthusiasm for a new and exciting material that would greatly expand his architectural resources.

Following some difficulties with contractors,[40] President Pierce, who had just succeeded Fillmore, on March 23, 1853 shifted control of the Extensions to the War Department. Twelve days later, on April 4, Jefferson Davis, the new Secretary of War, appointed Captain Montgomery C. Meigs as Superintendent of the work.[41] Meigs was a graduate of West Point, an officer of Engineers, and a most capable administrator as proved by his service throughout the Civil War during which he disbursed as quartermaster-general one and a half billion dollars without a single breath of scandal.[42] Schoenborn testifies to Meigs' enlightened interest in the work at the Capitol and attributes to him the pediments of the east front, the moving of the legislative halls from the west ends to the centers of the wings, the heating and ventilating equipment, the structural design of the iron roofs of the wings, and the introduction and execution of a large share of the works of art that enriched the building.[43]

In 1854 as the wings took form, the question of roofing and interior finish was reviewed. The success of Walter's iron library suggested that the same system be adopted in the wings.[44] The result was that all the roof structures, decorative ceilings, paneling, and trim were fashioned of cast-iron. Never before had iron been employed so extensively in an important public building. Not only did it make the building incombustible, but it also enabled the architect to satisfy, at a fraction of a usual cost, the increasing popular demand for an elegant display of richly moulded decoration. In interior ornamentation Walter abandoned the cool restraint of his earlier Greek Revival manner, and adopted the complex effulgence of the French Renaissance. A comparison of the halls of Walter and Latrobe dramatically epitomizes the changing taste of the 1850's. The details of the new halls are often somewhat heavy and maladroit, even allowing for the accumulation of many coats of paint that now mask the original crispness of the

castings. These defects were not necessarily inherent in the material or the casting process. Perhaps Walter had allowed Schoenborn to intrude unconsciously too much of the kind of Renaissance he had learned in his fatherland.

By 1854 it was apparent even to Congressmen that Bulfinch's timber dome was no longer an adequate climax for the enlarged Capitol.[45] Walter had not altered this feature in his early studies because, no doubt, he wished to get Congress thoroughly committed to the work at hand before broaching additional expenditures. Studies for a new dome must have been made toward the close of 1854,[46] for on March 3, 1855 the House appropriated $100,000 for the removal of the old dome and the construction of a new one according to Walter's design.[47]

As to the formal composition of the design, (Pl. 1, Fig. 1) Schoenborn states that "The outer form of the Dome was designed by Mr. Walter for which study he had before him copies of St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. Isaac's, the Dome of the Invalides, and the Pantheon in Paris."[48] In 1838 during his brief European tour Walter had studied at first hand all these examples,[49] save St. Isaac's which lay outside his itinerary and indeed was not completed until 1842.[50] To an alert and mature neoclassicist, the impact of these Renaissance and Baroque cupolas must have been a most stimulating experience, and very probably they stirred up in him a subconscious desire to emulate their gracious, stately forms.

With a sure eye Walter chose as his principal model Wren's masterly essay at St. Paul's.[51] He followed closely its main elements of peristyle, attic, and hemisphere. He adopted almost its exact dimensions for the diameters of drum and peristyle.[52] The 98-foot internal diameter of the existing Capitol Rotunda was not much smaller than St. Paul's 112 feet. And in the vertical proportioning of peristyle and hemisphere, Walter's dome is identical to Wren's.[53]

In many other ways, however, the Capitol dome is closer to Mansart's cupola over the Invalides chapel than to any of the rest of the structures cited by Schoenborn. The chapel's 91-foot internal diameter is only seven feet smaller than the Capitol rotunda. In total exterior height, from grade to top of hemisphere, the chapel's 240 feet is close to the Capitol's 222 feet. Both domes sit close to their facade walls and thus display themselves more clearly than the other models. Almost identical dimensions occur in both exterior and interior peristylar heights and in the diameters of exterior peristyles and drums.[54]

In proportioning of height of dome to the diameters of drum or peristyle, both are practically the same.[55] Lastly, both adopted a very wide oculus for the inner shell. So many correspondences could not have been fortuitous.

Despite these positive filiations, Walter's perception was much too mature to copy blindly any previous model. Granted that inspiration wad derived from these models, Walter's genius is well revealed by the differences he incorporated in his own design. Although his dome was the lowest of the series in total height, he exploited the 70-foot existing facade to achieve a greater apparent monumentality. The total height of the Capitol is, for example, 3.18 times the facade, as against 2.8 for the Pantheon, 2.6 for St. Paul's and the Invalides, and 2.16 for St. Peter's. This vertical emphasis was further increased by the proximity of the dome to the plane of the east facade, as already noted. Some critics have felt the dome is too close to the facade, a condition imposed by Thornton's plan,[57] but no one can dispute that it gains greater clarity because of this fact.

Notwithstanding this vertical accent, Walter gave the dome a massiveness very close to that of St. Peter's. The proportion of the total height of the dome to the diameter of the peristyle is 1.78 compared to 1.93 for St. Peter's.[58] The others range from 2.0 to 2.54. Likewise the proportion of the dome height (measured from peristyle sill to top of hemisphere) to peristylar diameter is 0.98, which lies between 0.84 for St. Peter's and 1.05 for the Invalides.[59] Moreover, Walter's peristyle has a diameter slightly more than three times its height (including the balustrade above), as against 3.87 for St. Peter's and 2.45 for St. Paul's.[60] The result was that the peristylar columns were almost the same height as the 25-foot columns of the facade porticoes, and thus the composition achieved a unity of scale that escaped both the disrupting effect of St. Peter's giant pilasters and the clutter of the super-imposed orders at St. Paul's.

Walter's most effective compositional innovation was his stressing of the exterior attic. At St. Peter's the attic was given only one-third the height of the peristyle. At St. Paul's, the Invalides, and the Panthoon the attics are approximately one-half the peristyle. But at the Capitol the attic rises to seven-eights of the peristyle,[61] and therefore establishes much more definitely the integrity of the drum, and becomes practically a third major element that adds smoothness and scale to the ensemble. The tall slender windows of the attic repeat the stately verticals of the peristyle below much more effectively than the small windows and shallow pilasters at St. Paul's. Another felicitous touch is the curving band of consoles at the top of the attic that links the attic pilaster lines to the hemisphere ribs above. Likewise the dark rhythm of the peristyle shadows and the attic windows recurs in the small windows girdling the lower zone of the hemisphere. Comparison of Walter's dome with the similar but plainer compositions of St. Paul's and the Pantheon definitely favors the Capitol solution.

Particularly successful, too, was Walter's strong handling of the swinging curves of peristylar and attic entablatures. Both major curves create encircling rings that define and confine peristyle and drum with powerful empathetic tension. These lines are reinforced by architraves, balustrade, and the console belt, combining together to form broad containing bands. Tonal values supplement this effect. The greys of the entablatures contrast dramatically with the brilliant highlights of balustrade, consoles, and the concave moulding at the base of the hemisphere.

Enough has been said to demonstrate conclusively that the superlative formal quality of the Capitol dome is a remarkable tribute to the sensitivity and skill of Thomas Ustick Walter. Despite his meager experience in the Renaissance and Baroque tradition, his authentic architectural genius bridged an almost insuperable barrier to create a work of surpassing beauty and power.

But Walter conceived his dome in forms that other men had developed in brick and stone. But as a serious student of construction he must have been fully aware that the structural record of masonry domes was not particularly savory. St. Peter's cupola had within fifty years of its completion exhibited a series of alarming cracks that provoked a succession of conclaves at which the experts disagreed both as to cause and cure. Many thought such defects were inherent and inevitable. Twenty-seven tons of iron in five stout rings were added in 1743-44 to bind the spreading vault.[62] Five decades later Quatremere de Quincy ventured the opinion that "the difficulties consequent to masonry domes should

Fig. 1—Washington, D. C. U. S. Capitol Dome (Walter) above east portico.

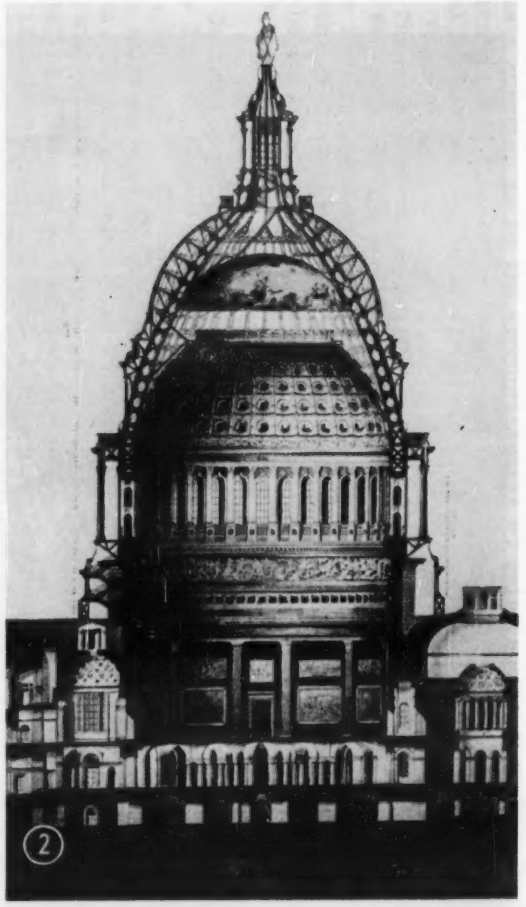

Fig. 2—Washington, D. C. U. S. Cap Dome (Walter) Section.

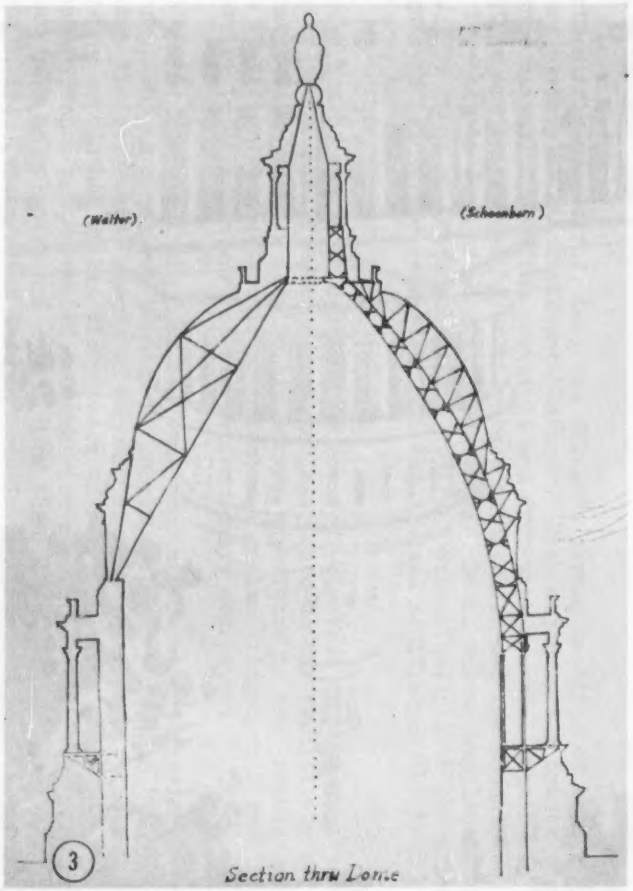

Fig. 3—Washington, D. C. U. S. Capitol. Sections for construction of dome by Walter and Schoenborn.

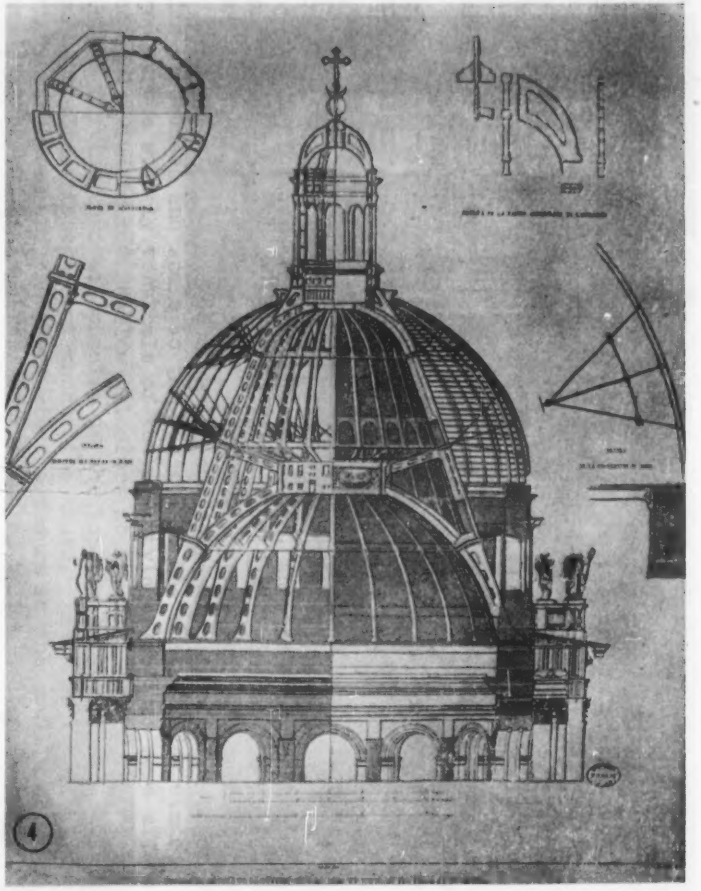

Fig. 4—St. Petersburg, Russia. St. Isaac's Cathedral (1840-42). Section. Ricard de Montferrand, Architect.

raise a question as to the appropriateness of using such a form."[63] Much as Walter admired the expressive forms of these models, they warned him of practical and almost insoluble problems.

The existing wall of Thornton's rotunda provided the only available support for Walter's new dome. Intended for light construction, this masonry would have been insufficient to carry the enormous weight or absorb the powerful thrusts of a stone cupola. To make it doubly difficult, Walter in proportioning his design to the enlarged building, had been forced to project the peristyle ten feet beyond the outer curve of the rotunda wall.

Confronted with unsatisfactory models and formidable restrictions, Walter very logically turned to iron as the most suitable material for the dome. (Pl. 1, Fig. 2) The choice was easier because he had before him, as Schoenborn relates, the precedent of the remarkable cast-iron dome of the Cathedral of St. Issac's, erected from 1840 to 1842 at St. Petersburg by Richard de Montferrand.[64] Montferrand, native of Paris and pupil of Percier, had served as assistant of Vignon on the Madeleine and of Belanger in 1811 in constructing the iron framed dome of the Halle-au-ble. In 1816, Montferrand had fled the Bourbon restoration to find a new patron in Emperor Alexander I who soon commissioned him to rebuild St. Isaac's as a monument to an all-powerful post-Napoleonic Russia.[65] The swampy site almost guaranteed difficulties from settlement. Seeing about him the widespread use of cast-iron in Russian building, and recalling his own apprenticeship on the Halle-au-ble, Montferrand chose to build a metallic version of Wren's triple-shelled dome at St. Paul's, with massive cast-iron framing replacing Wren's brick cone and timber hemisphere.[66] (Pl.II, Fig. 4) The Scotsman, William Handyside, who fabricated the St. Isaac's castings, had studied architecture with John White,[67] the grandson of Thomas Farnolls Pritchard who in 1776 had designed at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire the first bridge to be built of cast-iron.[68]

An elevation of St. Isaac's dome, clipped from a contemporary periodical, still remains in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol in a scrapbook prepared by Schoenborn. No cross section accompanies it, but Walter could easily have found one, either in the 1849 volume of the familiar Civil Engineers' and Architects' Journal,[69] or in the sumptuous folio monograph issued by Montferrand in 1845.[70] The Franklin Institute owns a copy of the monograph, but its date of accession is not recorded.[71] Perhaps the Library of Congress had acquired a copy by 1855, or perhaps Walter had indulged himself to a personnel copy.

It is certain that Walter was familiar with the section of St. Isaac's for in his memoranda Schoenborn drew a careful sketch to describe Walter's proposal for framing the dome.[72] (Pl. II, Fig. 3) It followed closely the lines of Montferrand's arrangement. Then, too, the ironwork of Walter's section apparently rested on a masonry drum extending up from the rotunda wall. This corresponded exactly to St. Isaac's.

As the study of structural details of the Capitol dome progressed, Walter accepted suggestions from both Schoenborn and Captain Meigs. Schoenborn wrote "In March, 1855, the old Wooden Dome was taken down and drawings for the new Iron structure commenced. For this work I also made the original drawings, as I have always done for work furnished by this office. Although Mr. Walter was a first-rate Architect and a good draughtsman, he had had little experience

in iron construction. As an example I will show in a sketch on the following page on the left side how he proposed to construct the skeleton of the Dome, and on the right side my proposition which latter was approved by Capt. Meigs and subsequently adopted as the feasible one and (the only one) by which the interior architecture could be properly developed."[73] (Pl. II, Fig. 3) In the second memorandum, Schoenborn again stated: "The construction of the Dome I claim as my design, which was adopted against several other skeems (sic) by Walter and Sonnemann (Sonnemann was employed by Meigs as Iron Constructor, but none of his designs were carried out except the construction of the wooden scaffolding, which is dueto him).I also studied out all the working drawings for this construction, and invented and designed all ornaments in- and outside of the Dome, including full sized details...The placing of the Columns of the Peristyle on brackets was Meigs' idea."[74]

Although Schoenborn seems to have lapsed into patronizing his patron, such an inference would be unwarranted. The whole tenor of his memoranda is sincere admiration of Walter, but he also wished recognition for his own valuable contribution. Walter was probably the first to admit the excellence of Schoenborn's suggestion. As a busy architect, he relied on his assistant to make such improvements wherever possible. His acceptance of them did not impute inability or ineptness.

Walter's solution would have worked, but Schoenborn's arrangement had definite advantages. The substitution of an elliptical profile in place of the straight cone of the middle section shortened the supporting struts of the outer hemisphere and permitted a fuller, higher rise and wider oculus for the inner dome, producing an effect of greater spaciousness akin to that of the Invalides chapel. Schoenborn likewise replaced Walter's masonry drum with a wall framed and sheathed in iron. This lightened the load on the old masonry and combined drum and cone into a single homogeneous structural unit. The cone ribs were fashioned of open work panels instead of the solid sections used by Walter and Montferrand.

There is no need to retell here the actual erection of the dome from 1856 to November 2, 1864 when Schoenborn, at Walter's request, represented the architect at the final ceremony when the head piece was affixed to the bronze Freedom atop the tholos.[75] Other historians have amply recorded the useless conflict between Walter and Meigs,[76] the delays during war years,[77] and Walter's tragic resignation in 1864.[78]

The benign form of the dome remains an architectural masterpiece fully attesting the maturity and high quality of Walter's artistic genius. Over the eight decades since it was finished, Walter's choice of iron and its structural disposition have been completely vindicated. In actual materials and in erection the Capitol dome was much more expeditious and economical than any traditional masonry vault.

Meigs himself testified that, "Our structure, being built of the strongest material used in construction, admits of a lightness, and yet of a strength, which cannot be attained in masonry. Each course will be so united as to form a continuous chain, capable of itself resisting all the thrusts it may receive from the parts above it. At the same time, the ease with which a

pattern once made is repeated in iron enables us to erect it at far less cost than anything of the same magnitude and magnificence in another material."[79] Compared with masonry domes the cost of maintenance for painting and caulking has been modest indeed. In 1933 a detailed structural inspection revealed the dome to be in quite satisfactory condition.[80]

Thus, in the separate categories of formal expression and of structural design it is not too much to claim that Walter surpassed all the models from which he drew inspiration. In grace, elegance, and vigor, and in strength, durability, and reasonable maintenance the Capitol dome was a performance of first-rate significance. If excellence in architecture has any logical definition, the Capitol dome must receive such recognition.

There are of course some critics who, assuming a puristic attitude, find a philosophic disunity between form and material. They see only a false front monumentality in which lowly iron apes virtuous stone. They take special delight in pointing to the sheet-iron curtain that pretends to be a solid masonry base, and in recalling that for years the hollow columns of the peristyle were impressed to serve as chimney stacks for fireplaces curtailed by this same overhanging base.[81] In short, they would demand that for the highest palm we must make Neue Sachlichkeit retroactive.

Such a literary bias would rule out almost every acknowledged masterpiece in the history of architecture. Pol Abraham and his disciples would discard Amiens because Gothic ribs do not support, but only decorate a vault. Hagia Sohpia would be jettisoned because Anthemius and Isidorus faked all sorts of subtleties. Poor Iktinos would be mercilessly cut to common stature because he accepted for marble a structural and ornamental system derived from timber work. Et cetera, ad infinitum, ad absurdum.

Let us admit that in art, as in life, too much purism and too much logic can lead us down a very dark blind alley. No narrow argument can vitiate the transcendent power of Amiens, the shining glory of Justinian's miracle, or the crystaline lucidity of Athena's sanctuary. We need not deny to those who wish to assume the dogma of rationalism the right to do so if they please; but they should be reminded that such an assumption does not thereby attain universal validity. There are those who acknowledge the existence of beauty itself and regard it as a sufficient goal.

If, therefore, Walter's dome performs its simple function as an effective focus for building and city, if its soaring mass lifts the observer's spirit and arouses within him a feeling of graciousness, dignity, serenity, and confident repose, if through its eloquence it requickens his awareness of our common aspirations, we should be generous enough to bestow the accolade such quality deserves. Walter poured out his genius in unimpeachable service to his fellow citizens. In turn they should accord his memory and his reputation such an acclaim as will in some degree requite the shabby neglect he received in his later lifetime.[82] His masterpiece remains for us one of the most memorable treasures of our common heritage.

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Footnotes

1. U. S. House of Representatives. Report 646, 58th Congress, 2d Session: Documentary History of the Construction and Development of the United States Capitol Building and Grounds. Washington, 1904. p.311

2. On March 17, 1926, Charles Bulfinch noted that 400 cords of wood for Capitol fireplaces were habitually stored in the unlighted vaulted cellars of the North and South wings, where attendants' lanterns created a dangerous fire hazard (D. H., 262). On May 17 of the same year Representative Cook referred to "the late fire in the library, as shewing the danger to which a single candle might expose the building." (ibid., 278). Commissioner of Public Buildings Elgar reported, "just as the fire was got under, the water was exhausted; and if the fire had continued a few minutes longer, the destruction of the entire roof would have been inevitable" (ibid., 313).

3. In February, 1804, Latrobe had urged "fireproof repositories for records" (D.H., 109). In December of the same year he reported that the south half of the south wing cellar had been vaulted in a "solid, permanent, and incombustible manner" (ibid., 113). On March 23, 1808, he noted that, "All the timber floors and galleries of the centre lobbies (of the North Wing) were taken up, and the work carried up by solid vaulting in brick from the foundation of the house to the top of the dome...In the great staircase, the old wooden skylight and cove was entirely taken down, and a solid brick cupola turned over this large area of 45 x 35 feet, and crowned by a lantern light" (ibid., 134-135).

4. In July, 1808 the great arch in the staircase hall threatened collapse (Brown, Glenn: History of the United States Capitol. Washington, 1900. I, 43; Unpublished correspondence between Latrobe and Lenthall, cited in Frary, I.T.: They Built the Capitol. Richmond, 1940. p. 280). In the same month President Jefferson ordered Latrobe to raise the floor of the Senate Chamber to the level of the gallery. This alteration imposed additional weight on the brick vault of the Supreme Court room below. On September 19 this vault collapsed killing the Clerk of the Works, John Lenthall. Latrobe reported on November 18 that "the cause of this accident is to be found in the manner in which the level floor of the Senate was raised upon the back of the vault; in the construction of which my better judgment yielded to arguments of economy. Since this accident, progress has been made in rebuilding this vault in a safer, though less expeditious manner " (D. H., 147).

5. On February 5, 1822, Charles Bulfinch forwarded to Col. Samuel Lane, Commissioner of Public Buildings, estimates for construction of the first Rotunda dome: in stone, $60,870.25; in brick, $24,988.90; and in timber, $19, 795.00 (D.H., 245). On April 10 the House adopted timber (ibid., 250).

6. On March 1, 1843, the House directed Secretary of War J.M. Porter to have the Corps of Topographical Engineers prepare plans and estimates for a new hall within the Old Capitol or in an addition "for the better accommodation of the House" (D.H., 408). On January 6, 1844, Col. J.J. Abert, of the Corps, recommended the construction of new North and South wings to provide improved Congressional halls, to increase the beauty of the building by giving it greater length to overcome its original disproport-

ionate height, and to prevent any interruption of Congress during construction. Abert had plans prepared by Lieut. Humphreys and Mr. Bruff. After these drawings had been completed, Abert had taken opportunity to consult with the eminent architect, William Strickland, who agreed that the problem could be solved only by new wings, and offered a design of his own (ibid., 408-409). In an estimate dated December 6, 1843, Strickland listed cast-iron window frames and sashes, twenty cast-iron columns, and iron roof trusses (ibid., 416-417). No doubt he had observed the use of iron for such purposes during his inspection tour of England railroads undertaken in 1825-26 for the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Internal Improvement. (Strickland, William: Reports on Canals, Railways, Roads, and Other Subjects, made to the Pennsylvania Society... Philadelphia, 1826). In 1828 Charles Bulfinch had already constructed the Senate Chamber gallery and stairs of cast-iron (Brown, op. cit.,I,61).

7. In 1843-44, Fillmore had served as the Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, to whom the question of new quarters had been referred. In 1849, as vice-president and presiding officer of the Senate, he was further impressed by the need of more spacious facilities for both groups.

8. D. H., I, 431-435. For Mill's use of brick vaults in the Treasury, Post Office, and Patent Office, see Louise Hall: Mills, Strickland, and Walter, their Adventures in a world of science (Magazine of Art, Nov., '47, p. 266-271).

9. Brown, op.cit., II, 115; D.H., 430-431.

10. Voted September 25 (D.H., 443). On September 19 the House had appropriated $100,000 for the construction of each wing (ibid., 441).

11. Brown, op.cit., II, 117. The competition had not been advertised until October 2, giving candidates only two months to submit their designs, one of many instances when laymen have evidenced their belief that architectural solutions spring full blown and inspired.

12. On February 8, 1851, Senator Jefferson Davis, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Buildings, submitted his report on the competition, whereupon that body, following a reprehensible but common custom, directed Mills to combine their best features (Brown, op.cit., II. 117; D. H., 446).

13. Brown, op. cit., II, 119. Mills promptly resigned the office of "Architect of New Buildings," to which President Andrew Jackson had appointed him in 1836. Mills died in Washington, March 3, 1855 at the age of 73.

14. William Sener Rusk, "Thomas U. Walter and his works" (Americana, Apr., 1939, xxxiii, 151-179), citing T. U. Walter: Genealogical Sketches, manuscript, dated 1871, now in the Pennsylvania Historical Society library.

15. Frary, op. city, 175.

16. Appendix A, 2; Appendix B, 1. (Numbers refer to original pages which are indicated in both appendixes)

17. Appendix A, 2.

18. Appendix A, 1.

19. Appendices A,B. I am indebted to Schoenborn s grandson Mr. August Eccard of Washington, for bringing these memoranda to my attention and for his generous permission to publish them. Mr. Eccard studied architecture at George Washington University and since 1923 has served as Civil Engineer in the Office of the Architect of the United States Capitol. Due to limitations of space, certain portions of the memoranda, dealing with events after Walter s resignation and chiefly concerned with Schoenborn s relations with Edward Clark. Walter's successor in 1865 as Architect of the Capitol, have been omitted. These memoranda are hereafter cited as A and B.

20. A, 3; B, 13.

21. A, 19.

22. A, 2; B, 1. This drawing is reproduced in Brown, op. cit., and Frary, op. cit., pl 60.

23. Brown, op. cit., II, 119.

24. A, 2; B, 1.

25. A number of these early studies are preserved in photographs mounted in scrapbooks on file in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol. Other original drawings are preserved in the same Office and in the Library of Congress. I am indebted to Mr. David Lynn, present Architect of the Capitol, for his courtesy in permitting me to study with the greatest freedom the materials in his care.

26. A, 3; B, 12.

27. Report of Capt. Meigs to Jefferson Davis, Sec. of War, Aug. 11, 1856 (D.H., 657-658), which says: "The original estimate contemplated the finish of the interior in the style of the old building — white washed walls, brick floors, combustible and decaying window dressings and door frames, and roofs of wood, plaster ceilings to the legislative halls, etc."

28. A, 2-3; B, 1-2,5.

29. A, 3; B, 2.

30. D. H., 364-365.

31. T. U. Walter to Wm. Easby, Commissioner of Public Buildings, Jan. 27, 1852 (D. H., 342).

32. The author is preparing a volume entitled "Iron and Architecture: a study in building and invention from antiquity to 1860," which will trace the impact of the rise of natural science on building techniques with special attention to the metallurgical and industrial revolution of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

33. Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania, 1830, p. 400; 1831, p. 232.

34. D. H., 344.

35. Report of the Architect of Public Buildings to Alex. H. H. Stuart, Sec. Int., Dec. 1, 1852 (D. H., 344). Seven of the eight bidders exceeded the original appropriation of $72,500. Janes, Beebe & Co., New York obtained the contract at $59,872. Erastus Corning & Co., Albany had bid $87,636; Bogardus and Hoppen, New York, $72,518 (ibid., 348).

36. Report of the Architect of Public Buildings to Alex. H. H. Stuart, Sec. Int. (D. H., 344)

37. Annual Report of Alex. H. H. Stuart, Sec. Int., Dec. 4, 1852 (D. H. 347)

38. D. H., 344.

39. Granville, A.B.: St. Petersburgh, a Journal of Travels...1829 (2nd. edit.), II, 75.

40. B, 15.

41. D. H., 585-586.

42. Art., "Meigs, Montgomery Cunningham" in Dictionary of American Biography.

43. B, 2-3.

44. The adoption of iron roofs must have been decided in 1854, for on Oct. 14, 1855 Meig's' Annual Report notes that "the construction of the iron roofs for the buildings, a very heavy work, had been commenced." The question of interior finish was raised by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in his Annual Report on Dec. 3, 1855, in which he wrote: "The work is, however, so far advanced, that the interior finish must now be considered. The original plan and estimate were for a finish similar to that of the main building , but this style would not be a fair sample of the present state of architectural skill, and it is supposed would not fulfill the wish of Congress. It has therefore been thought proper to have prepared for inspection specimens of encaustic tiling, instead of brick and sandstone, for the floor; of painting, instead of white washing, for the walls and ceilings; these and other contemplated improvements, not included in the original plan and estimate, may be introduced to a greater or less extent as Congress may provide. Modifications have already been made, such as the introduction of ornamental iron ceilings in the principal rooms, the substitution of iron for wood in the frames of the roofs, and the doors and windows of the basement story, an increased thickness of the marble in the walls, specially provided for by law, and a costly and extensive corridor required by the plan, but not contained in the original estimate." (D. H., 627). On August 11, 1856, Meigs' Report to Secretary Davis proves the effect of Walter's Library: "The substitution of a fire-proof iron roof and ceiling for the combustible wooden structure at first contemplated though considerably increasing the cost of the building were so obviously proper after the burning of the library and the construction of the iron library ceiling and roof, that it was done without any special reference of the question to Congress" (ibid., 658).

45. Representative Richard H. Stanton, of Kentucky, stated in the House on Feb. 22, 1855: "It is well known that the present dome is entirely too low to preserve the symmetry of the building when the extensions are completed. It will give a squatty appearance" (D. H , 991). The idea of a dominating dome had been broached in July, 1848 by C. B. Cluskey, Architect and Engineer to the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds. He proposed "a colonnade of thirty columns, made of cast-iron, resting on the third blocking course (of the Bulfinch dome), supporting an entablature and segment roof of the same material surmounted by an open tower, finishing with a liberty cap and vane at the top" (ibid.,990)

46. Representative Stanton also remarked: "The architect of the building has designed a dome, the plan of which I have seen, and which commends itself to my judgment; and which all who have seen it say is most beautiful and perfect" (D.H. 991).

47. D.H.; 993. The vote was 71 to 70, with the Speaker casting the deciding affirmative ballot.

48. B, 3.

49. Rusk, op. cit., 157.

50. Monteferrand, A.R. de: Eglise Cathedrale de Saint-Isaac. St. Petersburg, 1845. Plate 36, a view dated 1840 shows the masonry drum erected and the scaffold for the iron hemisphere in place. In 1842, construction was practically complete and the interior embellishment was beginning (p. 71).

51. For the following discussion of the dimensions and proportions of the Capitol dome and the models to which Walter referred, see table in Appendix C.

52. C, items h and i.

53. C, items c/i and e/g.

54. C, items e, l, h, i.

55. C, items c/i and c/h.

56. C, item a/b.

57. Schoenborn himself suggested the rebuilding of the east facade of the central block (B, 16). He probably followed Walter in this proposal. The proposal has been revived periodically. The usual arguments are that the base of the dome appears from acute angles to overhang the portico and that the painted Aquia sandstone should be replaced with marble to match the wings. Such motives do not seem sufficiently important to warrant the total destruction of the authentic original construction which retains such intimate relationships with the first years of the nation and its capitol. From the standpoint of aesthetic composition, the overhang can only be apprehended when an observer stands close to the wing facades, and the correction of this real, but minor defect by rebuilding the facade some feet to the east would lead to a much less pleasing result in destroying the effect of a shallow court now produced by the slight projection of the wings. In such a situation it would seem to be much wiser to resist further changes in the fabric of the Capitol.

58. C, item a/i.

59. C, item d/i.

60. C, item i/e.

61. C, item e/f.

62. Milizia, Francesco: Lives of the Celebrated Architects (Cresy translation). London, 1826. II, 266-270.

63. Quatremere de Quincy: Dictionnaire historique d'architecture... Paris, 1832. I, 338.

64. See note 50.

65. Thieme-Becker, XXV, 91; Planat, P.: Encyclopedie de l'architecture. Paris, n.d. Architectural Publication Society: Dictionary of Architecture. London, 1856-92, art. "Montferrant"; "Ricard de Montferrand.

66. T. L. Donaldson, "The Church of St. Isaac at St. Petersburg, erected by the Chevalier de Montferrand" (Civil Engineer's and Architect's Journal, XII, 1849, 9-12).

67. Handyside was born in Edinburgh in 1793. Intending to become an architect, he studied with White in London in 1808. In 1810 he accompanied his uncle, Charles Baird, to St. Petersburg where Baird owned a large machine works. Here Handyside helped to construct the first steamship to be used on the Neva river, erected four suspension bridges, produced steam engines, steamships, machinery for the Imperial Arsenal and Imperial Glassworks. In 1824 he began work on St. Isaac's. He designed improved pile drivers, apparatus to set the 56 foot monolithic columns of the porticoes, and respiratory masks to protect gilders from mercury fumes. He superintended structural and ornamental castings both in iron and bronze, and trained all the native craftsmen employed in the work. His most remarkable commission was, however, the setting of the 84-foot monolithic Alexander Column. Handyside was typical of the stream of British engineers and metallurgists who at the beginning of the nineteenth century carried English technology to all parts of the world. He returned to England in ill health in 1837 and died in 1850. (Obituary in Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, X, 1850-51, 85).

68. White, John: On Cementitious Architecture as applicable to the Construction of Bridges, with a prefatory notice of the first introduction of iron as the constituent material for arches of a large span by Thomas Farnolls Pritchard in 1773. London, 1832 (extracted from the Philosophical Magazine and Annals, XI, 183), p. 1.

69. XII, 1849, 9-12. The article contains two sections and three elevation drawings.

70. See note 50.

71. Letter to author from Mr. Henry B. Allen, Secretary and Director, Sept. 2, 1943. Walter resigned membership in 1845, the same year in which Montferrand published his monograph.

72. A, 5.

73. A, 4.

74. B, 3.

75. A, 6-7.

76. A, 6; B, 3-4.

77. A, 6.

78. A, 7; B, 4-5.

79. D. H., 995.

80. In 1933 Thomas W. Marshall, C. E., made a thorough inspection of the dome and reported that except for a very few minor matters the structure was in excellent condition. I am indebted to Mr. David Lynn, Architect of the Capitol, for providing me with a copy of this report. Mr. August Eccard (see note 19) expressed his opinion to me that Walter's cast-iron dome had cost over the years less to maintain than a comparable dome built of masonry.

Any iron structure requires frequent painting to prevent corrosion. The annual reports of the Architects of the Capitol constantly reiterate this work. Nevertheless, Walter's iron dome has remained completely free of those terrifying cracks and major repairs demanded by St. Peter's.

81. "Several chimneys open under the apron, and some even connect with columns, which become smoke stacks." (Annual Report, 1868, of the Architect of the Capitol Extension, p. 4).

82. A, 14-16; B, 16.

APPENDIX A

SKETCH OF MY EDUCATION AND CONNECTION WITH THE EXTENSION OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL, WASHINGTON, D. C.

page 1

I (August Gottlieb Schoenborn) was born in Suhl, Germany, Oct. 20, 1827. After visiting the public schools, learned my trade as, bricklayer, mason, stonecutter, and plasterer for three years, during the winters studied architectural drawing, then in 1843 went to Erfurt absolved (attended?) the Technical Institute and the School of Art for about 4 years, working between times as stonecutter on the Dome (cathedral), which was then to be restored. In 1848 I went to Berlin to continue studies but as a result of the political disturbances, found every place of learning closed.

After working a few months with the renowned Architect (Königlichen Baurats) Soller I returned home again and superintended the construction of some stone bridges.

In 1849 I shipped to America, arriving in New York in November. From there I travelled per canal to Wisconsin, which was then a newly settled country, affording no employment for me except as mason, plasterer, painter, and farmer.

So in 1851 I left for Washington, D. C. arriving in May. This trip was by canal and stage as far as Cumberland,/the rest by railroad.

page 2

In Washington I found soon Employment in the Architect's Office of the Capitol Extension under Mr. Thomas U. Walter, who had shortly before arrived from Philadelphia, bringing with him Clem L. West and Edward Clark as draughtsmen.

West was the only one of the two who done some drawing in the Office for a couple of years, while Clark was transferred to the Patent Office Extension, which was also under Mr. Walter.

When I commenced work in the Architect's Office of the Capitol in June 1851 there existed only a Plan and Elevation on a small scale of the proposed Extension of which the east front was without pediments and which still showed the old wooden Dome.

As the corner stone was to be laid on the 4th of July '51 there was some hurry in staking off the corners of the South wing and make the necessary excavation.

The corner stone was laid on the above date with appropriate ceremony under the northeast corner of the South wing, the usual glass vehicle with coins, papers etc was deposited under it and Daniel Webster was the orator. When I showed my drawings and my two medals, which I had brought with me from Germany, to Mr. Walter, he was in doubt whether I had made the former,

page 3

but after a few days trial he found/it all right and henceforth I have remained in his office and made all original drawings. He treated me as his son, and I remember two occasions on which he made the remark: "August is my right hand" — and "he is part of me" also "I wish I had a son like him."

Such expressions will illustrate our relations. President Millard Fillmore and his Secretary A.H.H. Stewart took great interest in our work and visited the office often. The President was particularly anxious to keep the old Capitol intact and have it touched by the wings as slightly as possible.

The Old wooden Library of Congress was burnt Dec. 24, 1851. It was early in the day, and as I was boarding near by, I hurried to the fire and helped to save as many books as possible. Some of the Engines, which were worked by hand, stood in the Rotunda, the floor of which was covered with water several inches deep. The most of the books were destroyed, and nothing left but the bare walls. In April 1852 we commenced the rebuilding of the present iron library.

In 1852 (pencil correction 1853) in Wash. Aqueduct was commenced by Capt. Montgomery C. Meigs. For this work I made quite a number of drawings, mostly architectural ones.

In 1855 Constantino Brumidi arrived from Italy. He subsequently embellished the Capitol with the following paintings: House Committee room on Agriculture, Senate Committee Rooms on Naval and Military Affairs, Post Office, Reception and Sergeant at Arms Rooms, — President's Room, and Corridors, also the large Canopy and Frieze in Dome. (The latter was continued by Phillippo Costaggini, also from Rome).

In April 1853 Capt. Meigs was put in charge of the Capitol Extension and Post Office Ext.

He made some sweeping alterations in the Plan, by which a large part of the already finished foundations were made useless. He changed the halls of legislation from the ends of the wings to the centre; he also insisted on the introducation of Pediments to the east front of wings.

In March 1855 the old wooden Dome was taken down and drawing for the new Iron structure commenced. For this work I also made the original drawings, as I have always done for work furnished by this office. Although Mr. Walter was a firstrate Architect and a good draughtsman, (he) had had little experience in iron construction. As an example I will show in a sketch on the following page, how he proposed to construct the skeleton of the Dome, on the left side and my proposition on the right side, which latter was approved by Capt. Meigs and subsequently adopted as the only feasible one and by which the interior architecture could be properly developed.

(Sectional drawing through Dome, see Pl.II, Fig. 3).

In the fall of 1858 the trouble that had been brewing between Walter and Meigs as to who was the superior officer in charge, came to a clash. Meigs contending that he was not only Engineer in charge, but also the Architect, and that Walter was only the chief draughtsman. The work was then under the War department, Floyd being Secretary of War and Drinkard his chief clerk.

So both went to Floyd with their complaints, who at last relieved Meigs and in the fall of 1859 replaced him by Capt. W. B.Franklin.

Then things went on smoothly until the commencement of the Civil War in 1861 when the office was closed for about 9 months. Mr. Walter said: Uncle Sam now wants all his money to buy horses and cannons with.

Forthwith I went to Genl. McDowell in Virginia and drawn maps for him. When McDowells Army moved forward to the wilderness I went back to Washington and made plans for forts, barracks, hospitals, and such other temporary buildings for the Quartermaster Generals Office. Meanwhile Mr. Walter notified me to come back again to the Office of the Cap. which was about the middle of May 1862.

On November 2, 1864 the head piece of the bronze Statue of Freedom on
page 7 top of the Dome was raised to its place./ Mr. Walter requested me to go and represent him, and so I and my brother William were the only ones who stood up there some distance above the head to witness the crowning ceremony amidst the firing of 35 guns from the surrounding Forts.

As the result of a misunderstanding or dispute about the letting of a contract for constructing both wings of the Congressional Library, with the Secretary of the Interior Mr. Walter resigned as Architect of the Capitol in the fall of 1864 and soon left for Philadelphia, his native city. He took the leading drawings with him, contending that they belonged to the Architect, expressing the hope at the same time, that he would soon be called back, which however never occurred.

The Capitol with its new Dome were now practically finished, but there was no marble balustrade between the main columns. Mr. Walter said when he left, that there was nothing needed there, and that anything put there would only mar the beauty of the Architecture,...it was put there a few years later by Mr. Clark, and this was about the only thing that was done by Mr. Clark to "complete" the Capitol.

page 8 In November 1865 Mr. Edward Clark took charge of the Office after having gathered a great many signatures from Members of Congress etc and through them gained the appointment from the President of the U. States....

Before going any further I will now mention something about the personell of the Office, as far as I can recollect. Mr. West had resigned after a couple of years service, then we had Wilderich v. Kammerhueber, Phillip Schrag, Anton Schoenborn and Henry F. Schoenborn, my brothers, De la Camp, Emil S. Friedrich, De Neuf, Howard, E. W. Donn (Sr.), Marshall, Arthur v. Witzleben, V. Koerber, of which the latter six were only apprentices. Adolf Faber and O. Sonnemann were employed by Capt. Meigs as Iron constructors and computers.

There were besides in Meigs' Office as Engineers: (Chs. G.) Talcot(t), Rives, Thomas and some others of lesser note. Meigs was considered to be a highly educated Engineer and generally as a man of excellent taste, but could not be called an Architect.

Of his successor Capt. Franklin, Mr. Walter used to say: "He is a big fat lazy man."

page 9 ....When he (Clark) took charge of the Capitol, the building was done,

and what he did thereafter was merely in the way of repairs, but the Court House extension was made during his administration in 1881. The Terrace around the Capitol was commenced in 1882 and finished in 1890 after plans page by Tho. Wisedell of New York, all working drawings and superintendence being done by me. In 1893 the old Armory was remodeled and prepared for the Fish Commission.

Other works that I have planed, drawn and executed under Clark are the following:

Reform School buildings, D.C.
Smithsonian Institution,
repairs and alterations
also Iron roof of Chapel
Peace Monument--foundation,
erection, surroundings
Soldiers Home, large plat of
grounds---Chapel---Officers
Quarters---Hospital---raising
main building--Gardner's
house--Barn--Gates and
Gatelodges--Enclosures, etc.
Department of Justice--
Annex--Plumbing & repairs
Engine House and Senate Stables--
House Stable
Maltby--plans--new boiler house--
new storehouse

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Washington Monument--
prop. terrace--crowning figure
Government Printing Office--
all buildings except on H Str.
all fire escapes--two complete
plans for new sites
Medical Museum on 10th St.
after Lincoln's assassination
Distr. Schoolhouses--High School--
G St.--H St.--County and two
for Alaska
New National Library--not adopted
Botanical Garden--
Main building, and all quarters
and greenhouses--Enclosure
Providence Hospital--two wings
Columbia Hospital--additions
Private houses for Senators
Morrill and Edmunds
as well as various other plans
and drawings

page 1

On Oct. 30, 1887 Mr. Walter died in Philadelphia. I felt like loosing my father. I have no doubt that he would have been called back to the Office of the Capitol, had not...Clark been in such a hurry to step into his place...

page 11 ...The truth is that I was his (Walter's) first draughtsman and assistant from June 1851 to the time of his resignation in 1864, and that during this time Clark was stationed at the Patent Office Extension as Superintendent and time keeper, never doing any service at the Capitol.

During the 13 years, which I spent with Mr. Walter I have learned a great deal from him, as he was not only an Architect, but also an excellent draughtsman and a good watercolorist. His father was a bricklayer and of german descend.

page 12 ...

page 13 ...I will relate an incident which occurred during the time that Walter and Meigs were at loggerheads. page

Meigs was trying to get entire control of the Office and demanded a number of original drawings from Walter, which the latter refused to deliver,

saying that he could not dispense with them. When Mr. Walter was absent for a few days, Meigs send me an order to deliver up to him all the drawings in the Office, which demand I promptly but politely refused./ When page 14 Walter returned he said that I had done perfectly right, but it took Meigs a long time to get over it and he growled long afterwards, that I had not obeyd his orders. But years later, after he had returned from his European trip with a book full of Sketches, he invited me to come to his Office, which was then in the Corcoran Gallery of Art on Bennsylv. Avenue, and work up his Sketches for a Residence, he wanted to build for himself near the Thomas circle (know afterwards as Fort Meigs). I spent some 6 weeks with him and what I did was to his entire satisfaction.

The Capitol grounds were designed by Fred. Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, who also labored before Congress to get the appropriations through.

He had furnished the original plan and I made a large plat of it about 6 x 7 feet and furnished all plain table sheets and details.

The marble terrace I have done in the same way.

I will now write out a list of extra work which I have done under Mr. Walter, partly during Office time, but a good deal after Office house and at night, for which I have not received extra pay, but for which Mr. Walter has page 15 claimed extra compensation, but which,/to the discredit of Congress, neither he nor his heirs have ever received.

Mrs. Amanda Walter died a few years after her husband in destitution and left two unmarried daughters. She as well as the latter have been before Congress a number of times but did not succeed of getting any relief. Walters claim amounted to $113,360.

The list is as follows:

Wings of the Patent Office Building Plans, Elevations and Sections (Chas. J. Uhlmann was employed afterwards for working drawings)	Walters Claim	$10,500
Congressional Library Main Room, all plans, construction of roof and details, full size.	Walters Claim	$ 7,410
Extension of Treasury Building General plan and Elevations (carried out by other Architects)	Walters Claim	$10,000
Extension of Post Office Dept. Building All plans, details and working drawings	Walters Claim	$36,450
New Iron Dome of Capitol All plans of Construction, Details full size and working drawings. O. Sonnemann working for Meigs in opposition to me, but none of his designs were adopted.	Walters Claim	$47,500
page 16 Marine Barracks at Pensacola, Fla. and at Brooklyn, N. Y. All plans and details	Walters Claim	$ 1,500

Making the whole claim for this extra work $113,360 which has never been paid; it having been passed by one branch of Congress or the other, but never became a law.

Besides the above I have done extra work for the Office, partly in my own time, as follows:

Government Insane Asylum
All plans, Details and working drawings
Washington Aqueduct
for Capt. Meigs. Gatelodges, bridges and architectural drawings
Presidents House
Plans of all floors, Elevations of the old structure, alterations, etc. for Capt. Alexander

page 17

Monument to unknown Soldiers and Maingates in Arlington, Va.

A residence for Senator Sherman in Ohio, and quite a number of private houses and other buildings etc in part for members of Congress

Government Arsenal for Harpers Ferry
All plans and details -- fireproof
Plat book of the City of Washington drawn from old data on more than a dozen sheets 18x24, according to scale.

E Street Baptist Church, Washington
All plans and details-- perspective view
Corcorans Mausoleum, Oak Hill Cemetery complete

page 18 ....I will copy here two testimonials, one from Capt. Meigs and the other from Mr. Walter:

Washington 8 June 1861

Prof. W.O. Bache, U.S. Coast Survey

Dear Sir: Mr. August Schoenborn is one of the best if not the best architectural draftsman I have ever known, He had some practice also in topographical drawing before he came to the Capitol Extension, of which he was the principal draftsman for many years.

You will find him, if you have employment for him, attentive, industrious and skillful.

I am Respectfully your obt servant

M. C. Meigs
Col. U. S. Army

page 19 This is to certify that Mr. August Schoenborn has been employed as a draughtsman on the public works under my direction for more than nine years, a considerable portion of which time he was engaged as draughtsman in chief.

It affords me pleasure to add that Mr. Schoenborn is the best architectural draughtsman that has ever come under my notice; that he has a critical knowledge of the science of architecture, a correct and well cultivated taste in design, a thorough knowledge of geometry and perspective and a skill in drawing and coloring seldom equalled.

For any one who may require the services of a draughtsman, I unhesitatingly recommend him.

Thomas U. Walter
Architect U.S. Capitol etc etc.

Washington, D. C., Sept 28, 1861

I have written down this Memorandum without regular order—just as it came to my mind, and I herewith swear to the correctness of it.

Should it ever, after I am gone, come before the eyes of a Historian who interests himself in the construction of this great Capitol and its builders Thornton, Hadfield, Hoban, Bulfinch, Hallete, Latrobe, and Walter page 20 and thinks that my name/ is worth mentioning besides the others, or maybe one of my descendants may come across this memorial and may think it proper to publish some of it, then my object will be accomplished.

This Capitol is not completed, from an architectural point of view. In the first place the old middle portion is of poor sandstone, and the wings of marble.

It requires to be all of the same material as far as the exterior is concerned, then the new Dome wants to have a greater mass under it for apparent support, and also to predominate over the wings, also the wings which appear to be so much separated from the middle body wants solidifying and uniting.

To accomplish this Mr. Walter has left a plan when he retired from the work in 1864.

I also made a plan some 15 years later a little different from Walters and somewhat plainer.

Both of these plans are now in the office.

August Gottlieb Schoenborn

Washington, D. C., August 21, 1895

APPENDIX B

page 1

CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING OF THE CAPITOL EXTENSION, NEW DOME, STONE TERRACE, Etc. WITH THE PARTICULAR OBJECT TO SHOW THE SERVICES OF THE DIFFERENT MEN WHO WERE EMPLOYED IN THIS WORK ... by an eye-witness (Ausust Schoenborn) (January, 1898)

Mr. Thomas U. Walter, a distinguished Architect from Philadelphia, who had built the Gerard College in Phila.d from July 4, 1833 to Jan. 8, 1848 as well as many other prominent buildings there and in Pennsylvania, was selected in 1850 to build the wings and new Dome of the United States Capitol in Washington. He arrived here in the spring of 1851 and brought with him a ground-plan and Elevation for this Extension, drawn to a scale of thirty feet to an inch.

Soon after his arrival I found employment with him as draughtsman — my first work being a ground-plan of cellar of the South Wing to a scale of 10 feet to 1 inch. After this we hurredly laid off the South wing on the ground and on the 4th of July 1851 the Cornerstone was laid under the northeast cornor of this, the South wing. I have continued as draughtsman in the Architect's Office of the Capitol to the present day, (January 1898) —47 years—

with the exception of about nine months in 1861, when the civil war broke out.
page 2 /During most of this time I was chief draughtsman and made over 6000 original (finished) drawings for the Capitol, and besides a goodly number for public and private buildings in this city and elsewhere (all for the Architect's Office). On Dec. 24, 1851, the old (wooden) Library of Congress caught fire from a defective flue and was destroyed with most of its contents. In 1852 the main (middle) room was restored--provided with iron alkoves, iron ceiling and skylight. The wings of the Library, which contained mostly Committee rooms, were cleared out in 1853 and provided with iron alkoves etc similar to the main room--the contractors for this work were Janes, Beebe & Co. of New York, afterward Janes, Fowler, Kirkland & Co. who afterward furnished the iron work for the New Dome. On April 4, 1853 Montgomery C. Meigs, Capt. page 5
of Engineers was appointed by Jeff. Davis, Secr. of War as Disbursing Agent and Superintendent of the Capitol. He was a first class Engineer and a very capable man, an art enthusiast and liberal with the public money, but not exactly an Architect. To his ability and genius are due the substitution of Pediments on the east front for plain Balustrade fronts--the placing of the Halls of Congress in the middle of the wings, while in the original plan they were on the west ends. In heating and ventilating the building his ideas were carried out, for which his practical assistant was Robt. Briggs of Boston
page 3 (1858). Meigs designed the roofs of both wings./To Meigs energy and protection are due the introduction and execution of a large share of the works of art in the Capitol, such as Paintings, Sculpture etc.

In 1855 the Old Dome (wood and brick) was taken down, and the present iron Dome commenced.

The construction of the Dome I claim as my design, which was adopted against several other skeems by Walter and Sonnemann. I also studied out all the working drawings for this construction and invented and designed all ornaments in--and outside of the Dome including full sized details. The outer form of the Dome was designed by Mr. Walter for which study he had before him copies of St. Peters, St. Pauls, St. Isaacs, Dome of the Invalides and the page 6
Pantheon in Paris.

The placing of the Columns of the Peristyle on brackets was Meigs' idea.
O. Sonnemann was employed by Meigs as Iron Constructor, but none of his designs were carried out, except the construction of the wooden scaffolding, which is due to him.

Towards October 1858 developed a scrambled for Supremacy between Walter and Meigs which culminated a year later in the recall of Meigs and replacement by Capt. Will. B. Franklin, Capt. of Topograph, Engineers.

Meigs who had no Architectural training, tryed to have entire controll of the work, calling Walter his first draughtsman, which was too much for the page 7
page 4 latters proud spirit./ About that time I received an order from Meigs to deliver to him all drawings in the Office; as Mr. Walter was absent from the City, I refused and as a result earned a reprimand from Meigs and an approval from Walter. Floyd who was then Secretary of War leaned towards Walters side in this struggle, so Meigs had to step back.

Capt. Franklin was an easy man to deal with; he was at his post regularly, but did not take any particular interest in the building, such as Meigs

had done, so we got along with him splendidly. Without my solicidation on July 3rd, 1860 he raised my pay to $150 per month.

....

During the summer of 1863 the wings and dome were practically completed, as appears from Walter's last report, dated Nov. 1864. Mr. Walter left for his home in Germantown, Pa. for which I had drawn him the plans a year previous.

page 5 He went away in a rage, taking all leading drawings with him, saying that it was customary that architects never parted with their drawings, hinting at the same time that he must be recalled within a short time.

The cause of his anger was, that his contract, made with his friends in New York (Janes, Fowler, Kirtland & Co.) for constructing the alkoves for the wings of the Library, was annulled by the Secretary of the Interior, then in charge.

Meanwhile Mr. Edward Clark, who was during the war, Architect for the Quartermaster Department, being now out of work, succeeded in stepping into Walters place, and so barred him out. We had then very few drawings left in the Office, but Clark said: "Never mind, we must try to get along with them." We did get along, but poor Mr. Walter was forced out of his place. He (Walter) now tried to persuade (me) to leave the Capitol and go into partnership with him in Philadelphia. I hesitated; finally Clark made all sorts of promises to hold me, and I stayed...

I can truly say, that I made all the original drawings of this work, including all plans, sections, details, all architectural ornamentation and enrichment, Column-Capitals and even working drawings. The other draughtsmen, who were employed being mere copyists. / During one of Walters visits page 6 sometime afterwards, he...secured a place for me in the Architects Office of the Treasury under Bell, with double the salary I received at the Capitol, but again Clark coaxed me to stay with him...Walter brought him with him in 1851, having picked him up as he said as an Apprentice in a Carpenter Shop in Philad. where his father and brother were Carpenters.

He had not learned drawing and was placed by Walter at the Patent Office Extension, which was also under Walter, as Superintendent, or rather as he appeared on the payroll as Assistant Superintendent...

For making working drawings, he (Clark) engaged after a while Mr. Chas. J. Uhlmann and also borrowed me once in a while. He could not draw and therepage 7 fore never made a drawing in his life/.... during the long years of service in public Office (he) had acquired a good deal of the routine as Superintendent...Clark was Walters Assistant at the Patent Office Ext. (rather his Assist. Superintendent) but on no other building except for a time at the General Post Office Extension...

Artists who embellished the Capitol: Constantino Brumidi from Italy commenced to paint at the Capitol about 1855; his first work was the Committee room on Agriculture in the South wing. After this he painted a number of rooms, as in the North wing the Committee rooms on War and on Navy—on the Dist. Col. Waiting Room, Presidents room, Sergeant at Arms room, Ceiling of

Representatives Hall, also the frieze and Canopy in the Dome (in 64 and 65) which was his last work in the Capitol.

page 8 Brumidi died in Febr. 4, 1880 and was buried in Glenwood cemetery. He was a great fresco (painter) and designer and a rapied worker in his younger days. Some of his work has been criticized of not being up to the standard, but see what an amount of work he has done at the Capitol in less than 10 years. During which time he has also painted a number of Churches and private residences in this country, Mexico and Cuba. He also designed the bronze Railings for private stairways and bronze work for gallery doors (of the) Senate Chamber.

His successor for finishing the frieze in the Rotunda was Philippo Costaggini who commenced in 1884; but was a difference between his work and Brumidis; although he studied in the same school in Italy as Brumidi. Up to this day the frieze is not finished, lacking two groups; the Senate not having agreed as to the subjects that should be painted.

Brumidi and myself were great friends.

The german painter Emanuel Leutze painted in 1861-62 in dry fresco "Westward the Course of empire takes its way." We were also good friends.

The great American Sculpture Thomas Crawford in Rome furnished the models for the following: The Progress of Civilization in the Pediment of the page 9 North Portico. The bronze door below this with the marble figures. / The bronze door for the South wing (not executed yet--Models are stored in the Crypt). And the bronze Status of freedom at the apex of the Dome. The plaster models for these were cast in Rome by W. H. Rinehart, an American. The clock in the Hall of Reps. was designed by me and cast in bronze by Messrs. Archer, Warner, Miskey & Co. in Philada. who also cast the four Bronze Railings for the private stairways.

ge 11

Mr. Thomas, a frenchman modeled and superintended the modeling of most of plaster ornaments in the Capitol. Randolph Rogers modeled the Columbus bronze door for the old central entrance in 1860, which was cast by F. v. Miller in Munich.

Simons in Rome modeled Judge Marshall in 1884. I superintended the erection west of the Terrace.

Provest, Winter & Co. were the Contractors for the marble work of the wings; the marble came by schooner from Lee, Mass.--The Columns fr. Baltimore.

The Iron work for the Dome and middle room of Library also the roofs of wings and other iron work were furnished by Janes, Beebe & Co. (afterward Janes, Fowler, Kirtland & Co.) of New York City.

The picture of the Electoral Commission was painted in 1877-78 by Cornelia Adele Fassett. I had to help her out in sketching the perspective of the Ceiling of the Court room on her canvass.

age 12

page 10 Among the painters who helped to decorade the Capitol must be mentioned Karstens, Rakemann and Leslie.

Frederick Law Olmsted the landscape gardener from Boston had prepared plans for the enlargement and improvement of the Capitol Grounds and Stone terrace.

The former work was commenced in March 1874. I prepared the plain table sheets for this to exact Scale, from which his Engineers laid the work out; I also prepared a large plan of same for the Office, which has been in use ever since.

The Stone Terrace and approaches to same was designed by Tho. Wisedell of New York. But as Clark was nominally the Archit. of the Capitol, he had his say about it. So he found it entirely too rich in Ornamentation, and wanted to have it as plain as a barn.

Wisedells plan was thrown aside and I worked out a plan according to above mentioned instructions, furnished all working drawings, gave all lines and levels, traveled to the quarries and in fact superintended the work from beginning to end. The Terrace was built from 1882 to 1890. The marble for North Terrace came from the Baltimore quarry--for the South front from Lee, Mass. and for the West fron from Rutland, Vt.

The steps on the west are North river blue stone.

It is to be regretted that within the last 30 years no pressure has
ge 11 been brought to bear upon Congress for / making a start towards completing the Capitol. The building cannot remain in its present condition. The central part is too weak for the extensions and the dome; the east-and west fronts want uniting and harmonizing--the old sandstone fronts require hiding by marble Extentions. Plans to this effect have been prepared by Walter and by myself, but Clark, on whom depended the urging before Congress, has set quietly in his Office...taking it easy.

I have also within the last few years drawn plans for fire-proofing the wooden roof of the old building, but they sleep quietly in the Office.

Walter used to call them old tinder boxes, that might catch fire at any time and threaten the Dome. And further the Rotunda wants decorating and finishing badly. No painting has been done there since 1865. The old portion does not suit the new, but requires an entire architectural remodeling; the doors are too small and bare. A pencil sketch for this work exists in the Office. It shows large doors with polished white italian columns and entablature with leaning figures on top; something of the Style of the Main eastern door to the North wing. Then the old (lower) part of the Rotunda should be treaded as a base for the (new) Superstructure. Most of the American Marbles might be introduced into this base.

The eight paintings should be raised and the horried baso-relievos above abolished.

page 12 During the first two years of the building of this Capitol Extension President Millard Fillmore and his Sec. of the Interior Alex. H.H. Stuart took great interest in our work, particularly the President came frequently to the office; he insisted that the old building should be as lightly touched by the wings as possible: In compliance with his wish the connecting Corridors were designed. There were also plans for the Capitol Extension by

Robt. Mills and by Chas. F. Anderson. The latters plan showed pediments on the East front, which were afterwards adopted and carried out by Meigs. As a result Anderson brought suit (in) 1864 and recovered from the Government some $5000 for adopting part of his design. When his case was tried before the Court Anderson attempted to bribe me so as to testify in his favor, but in vain. I stuck to Walter and swore only to what I knew positively.

I have drawn during Office hours and also during Extra time (evenings and nights) plans and designs for Government buildings, as follows:

Wings of Patent Office Building—Treasury Building Extension, General Post Office Building Extension—Dome on Capitol (my idea of Construction)—Congressl. Library—Marine barracks at Pensacola, Florida and Brooklyn, N.Y. Insane Asylum D. C. — Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Va. Plats of Washington City in 15 large Sheets.

page 13 Besides these I have done a good deal of private work for Walter, even at his home on F. Street, where I was often invited to an oyster-supper. But Walter thought much of me; he used to call me "his right hand" said "You are part of me" and "I wish I had a son like you." For the night work done in the Office I received a small extra pay, but at that time I found pleasure and satisfaction in work and in studying new problems.

My dear Friend Walter died in Philad. Oct. 30, 1887, after he had been employed for a few years as draughtsman at the New City Hall there. He died almost pennyless; his family (wife and two daughters) being compelled to renew Walter's Claim of some $113,000 for extra work at the hands of Congress. After a few years Mrs. Walters died without having received anything from Congress for settling this just claim, although the demand had been gradually reduced to $5000. And yet the poor girls come here at every session of Congress with the expectation of relieve...

I owe much of what I am to my friend Walter, and will ever think with pleasure of the time I have been associated with him.

I never appeared on the payrolls otherwise than draughtsman, but to Walter I have been more than that...

page 14 ....

The Washington Aqueduct was planed and executed by Meigs and built from Nov. 1853 until 1863. I have furnished for this work all drawings for buildings and for some of the bridges.

I have also worked in detail for Meigs, then Quartermaster General, his house on N St. (called Fort Meigs). Meigs, although quite different from Walter and in spite of my having offended him, by not obeying his orders once, thought much of me and appreciated my talent and ability, as appears from a testimonial he gave me, addressed to Prof. Bache at the Coast Survey in 1861, after the Office at the Capitol was temporarily closed, in which he says: "Mr. August Schoenborn is one of the best, if not the best Architectural draughtsman I have ever known" etc.

ge 15 I have incorporated (in) my Scrap books a number of Photographs, taken from a part of my drawings (mostly Dome drawings) which should form a part of this Chapter and be preserved.

As a Supplement, will add the following:

Samuel Strong was employed as a Superintendent for Masonry by Mr. Walter in Aug. 1852.

He diverted some labor and materials from the Capitol to his private use and thereby brought on an investigation which resulted in his discharge, and as it also reflected a little on Mr. Walters administration for tolerating such crookedness, Capt. Montgomery C. Meigs of the Engineer Corps was placed in charge of the Capitol building March 29, 1853.

.....

(bottom of page cut off; continues discussion of Walter's claim for compensation)

ge 16 .... of Congress to press their just claim, but in vain. During their stay they (Walter's daughters) stopped at a cheap boarding house...During the present session (Febr. 1899) the poor girls have not made their appearance, probably for being unable to raise the traveling expenses...The Old Capitol as it was in 1851 looked well and in proportion; but the present building with its wings and New Dome might be compared with a man of ordinary size, having arms ten feet long and a hat five feet hight. Therefore the old middle building requires extending east and west as indicated below, which extension should be faced with white marble as a matter of course to correspond with the wings...(bottom of page cut off; sketch missing)...

ge 17 The Rotunda as to its old and new parts is out of harmony and looks unfinished and dirty.

The wooden roofs of the middle building are a constand danger, and should have been made fireproof long ago at the same time abolishing the two flat wooden domes, which mar the beauty of the building.

...

ge 18 ...I will now name some contractors and employes, which have done work at the Capitol Extension and Dome. Alexander Provost & W.H.Winter have done the marble work by contract.

John Rice and Chas. Heebner have furnished the marble from Lee, Mass.
M. G. Emery was contractor for the Granite work.
Janes, Beeby & Co. furnished the iron work for the Dome.
Poole & Hunt of Balt. furnished the iron columns for the Dome.
Hayward & Bartlet furnished iron door-and window trimmings.
J. F. Connolly of Balt. furnished 100 monolithic columns for the Porticoes at $1550 a piece.
Narson and Dodge of New York got the contract for heating and ventilating the wings. They employed Rob. Briggs Jr. a very able man for the execution of this work (1858).

In 1896 Prof. Woodbridge of Boston overhauled this work in the North wing, which was executed by Julius E. Rettig.

page 19 Cornelius and Baker of Phil. have done the Bronze work.

A. B. McFarlan was foreman of brickwork.

After him from Febr. 23, 1856 Zephaniah Jones; both excellent men for their work.

Pringle Slight was foreman of Carpenters. His son, Robert had charge of the Dome-scaffolding, when the poor man lost his life by a fall from a great height.

Saml. Chambion was foreman of Smithwork.

Jas. A. Tait was Inspector, Measurer and Weigher, he was afterwards for a long time Justice of the p(eace; torn).

B. Severson was employed as Engineer, principally for the Wash. Aqueduct.

L. W. Denham was Chief Clerk to Capt. M(eigs; torn).

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(MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON THE U.S. CAPITOL)

page 20 (Factual correction of statement in Hazelton, Geo. C., Jr.: The National Capitol. NY, 1897)
(Factual correction of statement in Architecture and Building, Dec. 4, 1897)
(Historical and statistical summary of the Capitol).

The Capitol was commenced in 1793 by Hallet, succeeded by G. Hadfield and Hoban, who finished the North Wing. Hy. B. Latrobe built the South wing and prepared the halls for Congress.

Capitol burnt by the British in August 24th, 1814.

In 1815 the Capitol was restored under B. H. Latrobe until 1817 when C. Bulfinch superseeded him, building the Rotunda and Library. These have been completed with the accompanying terraces, gateways, lodges, etc. in the course of ten years. (1827)

The North wing was commenced in 1793 and finished in 1800, cost $480,262.57

The South wing was commenced in 1803 and finished in 1808, cost $308,808.31

The Centre building was commenced in 1818 and finished in 1827, cost $957,647.25 Whole cost $1,746,718.33

...

page 21 Old Capitol covered 67,220 sq. ft., 1½ acres; surrounding park 22½ ac.

APPENDIX C

TABLE OF DIMENSIONS AND PROPORTIONS OF CAPITOL DOME AND ITS MODELS

In spite of the well known tendency for measured drawings to vary, the following dimensions, given to nearest foot and taken from standard texts, are sufficiently accurate to justify the arguments based on them. The dimensions of the Capitol dome refer to the executed design.

	St.Peter's	St.Paul's	Invalides	Pantheon	Isaac's	St. Cap.
a. Height, grade--lantern base	361 ft.	278 ft.	234 ft.	247 ft.	279 ft.	222ft
b. Height, grade--top of ext. wall	167	107	90	88	109	70
c. Height, top ext. wall-lant. base	194	171	144	159	170	152
d. Height, peristyle base-lant. base	157	144	124	121	136	122
e. Height, peristyle & balustrade	49	56	49	49	66	41
f. Height, attic (top balustr.-base hemisphere curve)	17	24	25	24	24	35
g. Height, hemisphere	91	64	50	48	46	46
h. Diam., ext. of drum	159	110	100	81	87	105
i. Diam., ext. of peristyle	187	137	117	111	110	125
j. Height, floor-oculus	327	217	180	196	232	149
k. Height, floor-int. peristyle base	186	120	108	117	144	73
l. Height, Int. peristyle	49	38	39	44	47	35
m. Height, Int. dome	92	58	33	34	42	98
n. Diam., Int. of drum (at base)	138	112	91	69	74	98
Proportions						
a/b (total H : wall H)	2.16	2.6	2.6	2.81	2.56	3.18
a/i (total H : peristyle D)	1.93	2.03	2.0	2.23	2.54	1.78
a/h (total H : drum D)	2.26	2.52	2.34	3.05	3.4	2.12
c/i (dome H : peristyle D)	1.04	1.24	1.23	1.43	1.55	1.22
c/h (dome H : drum D)	1.22	1.55	1.44	1.96	1.96	1.45
k/i (dome H' : peristyle D)	.84	1.05	1.06	1.09	1.23	.98
k/h (dome H' : drum D)	.99	1.31	1.24	1.5	1.57	1.16
e/f/g (peristyle H : attic H : hemisphere H)	1:.35: 1.85	1:.43: 1.14	1:.52: 1.02	1:.49: .99	1:.36: .70	1:.87: 1.13
i/e (peristyle D : peristyle H)	3.82	2.45	2.39	2.27	1.67	3.07
j/n (int. H : int. D)	2.36	1.94	1.98	2.84	3.14	1.52
j/l (int. H : int. peris. H)	6.68	5.63	4.62	4.45	4.9	4.2
m/l (int. hemisph. H : int. peristyle H)	1.88	1.52	.86	.78	.72	1.1

REGIONAL ASPECTS OF EARLY LOUISIANA ARCHITECTURE

Paper presented before the Society of Architectural Historians, Boston, Mass., January 29, 1948

Buford L. Pickens

The contemporary student of American architectural history seeks a different set of values from those sought by his eclectic predecessors a generation ago. Tracing the vagaries of historical styles from abroad is less significant today than the study of evolving basic forms, especially the forms which stem directly from the people themselves, their requirements of use, and from the consitioning effect of the natural elements of the region. One of the problems for the new historian and teacher is to re-examine and re-interpret the solution of practical problems in plan, structure and materials, not in terms of arrangements of historical moldings and orders, but rather in terms of basic visual elements, e. g., volume, mass, linear quality, shape, color texture, etc.

Seen in this light, there are certain aspects of the first hundred years of Louisiana architecture which deserve more attention than they have received. In a typical American way, the principal interest in architecture of the lower Mississippi River country has been centered in the more glamorous and romantic buildings of a later "Gone With the Wind" period. Here the familiar Classical and Greek Revival earmarks provide a specious index to style. The earlier and less monumental building types which evolved prior to 1800 have not, as yet, been given careful study even though they provide rich material for the demonstration of the regional principle.

The development of architectural form in America may be compared to the cultivation of a new variety of plant. The seeds from the original European species were sowed at different spots on virgin American soil under conditions capable of producing vital new characteristics. But in most cases, even before a new strain could be clearly defined, the new plants were crossed and re-crossed with inbred descendants of the original species. The resultant hybrids, identified by historical style labels, were capable of altering appearances enough to hide basic architectural form, but they added nothing to the structure of the plant as it struggled to express its new life. Only after some three hundred years are we now beginning to recognize the emerging American form.

When the English first settled along the North Atlantic coast in the 17th century, medieval forms were traditional. Because the principal regional difference in the new land was severity of climate and need for physical protection, the building forms were compact, tightly closed, and of geometrical purity and plainness. The steep triangular gables, small openings, bulging overhang and later added lean-to, all express the fear of vast open space and the physical and psychological need for people to turn inward toward the central hearth, and to exclude the hostile elements of nature or men. Later, Renaissance and Baroque importations were grafted to the original medieval strain in such a manner as to blur womewhat the evolution of the earlier form.

In contrast to this kind of beginning, the French, on the other hand, did not come to Louisiana until the time of Louis XV, when renaissance and baroque ideas in design were dominant. The first drawings done in New Orleans[1] for the Ursuline Convent in 1745 (Pl. III, Fig. 1) reveal the love of regularity and

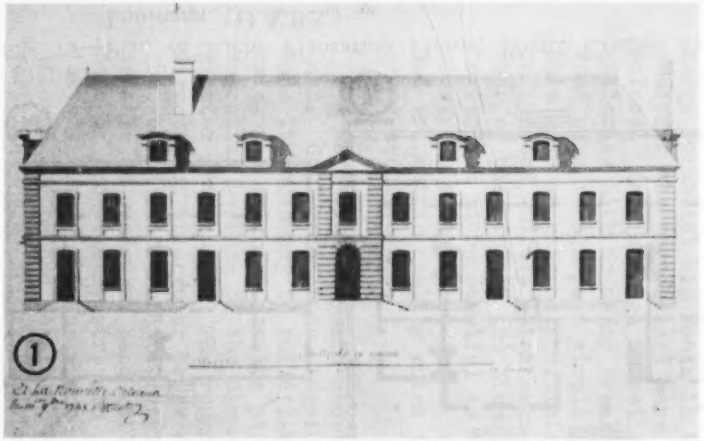
order, with a strong horizontality resulting from the rhythmical repetition of standardized parts. Moreover, in contrast to the earliest Atlantic examples, we can see the dominantly baroque expansiveness - the expressed desire for spaciousness - even in the design of small utilitarian buildings auch as the guard house drawn in 1734 (Pl. III, Fig. 2). Architectural elements in these early designs which persist in later regional variations are: the strongly unifying hipped roof which covers the porch on two sides of the enclosed rooms; the narrow dormer; the French type door and window; the bricks-between-posts (half timber) wall construction; the interior chimney; and a preference for the geometrically simple block.

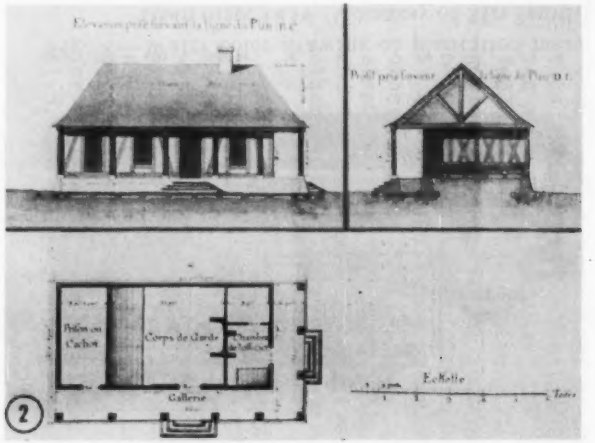
All this with the distinguishing "joy of living" came as tradition with the people. But Louisiana contrasted markedly with the mother country. The sunlight was stronger and longer, giving a semi-tropical summer of nine months instead of three. The rainfall and relative humidity was noticeably greater. The land was perfectly flat, extremely low, and susceptable to seasonal floods. And for Frenchmen used to masonry construction, there was no stone whatever, only river silt suitable for making soft bricks. But, in lieu of other material, there was a plentiful supply of strong weather-resistent cypress wood.

Before 1800 the French had settled along the rivers and bayous for more than a hundred miles to the north and west of New Orleans. The buildings they left, from the simplest cabin to the most elaborate plantation house, follow a consistent pattern establishing a clear-cut 18th Century regional solution to living in Louisiana. Throughout this area one finds, today, many original versions, and there are 19th Century descendants all along the Gulf Coast from East Texas to Florida.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the traditional Louisiana house is that it is always raised above the ground, usually on brick piers. In the small one-story structures, the main living floor is elevated about two feet - enough for air to circulate freely underneath (Pl. III, Fig. 4); in the larger houses, the elevation is from seven to eight feet, permitting a full basement story (Pl. III, Fig. 3).[2] The primary reason for raising the floor off the ground is to avoid the dampness in the living area, and to provide a convenient and well lighted basement with masonry floor and walls. (In other sections of the country, where soil conditions permit, the basement is usually a dark underground cave.) The contemporary student will recognize the planning advantage in this clear separation of the service and storage element from the living space. In addition, it provided to the living floor a better view over the flat landscape and easier circulation of air through the house. In other times and places, notable architects, among other Palladio, Wright, the LeCorbusier, have all used the "raised cottage" idea, but in Louisiana it is prescribed by nature.

The second feature of the Louisiana house is the porch or open gallery which runs along one or more sides of the building (Pl. IV. Fig. 5). There are several qualities which distinguish the Louisiana gallery from porches and verandas in most other parts of the country. (a) In proportion to the building the gallery is seldon "dinky": its breadth required by utility gives scale. Both the gallery roof and floor serve as effective solar controls, screening the semi-tropical sun from walls and interior space and reducing the glare. (b) In the larger houses the gallery distinguishes itself from the porch because it is truly a circulation element, being connected to





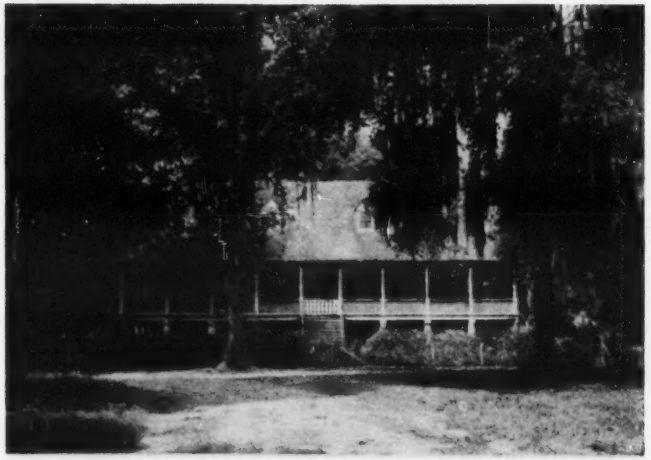


Fig. 1—Elevation cloister side Ursuline Convent—dated New Orleans, November 10, 1745.

Fig. 2—Drawings of Guard House—dated New Orleans, February 28, 1734.

Fig. 3—Parlange Plantation House, New Roads vicinity, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana (H.A.B.S. 39. Photo—R. Koch)

Fig. 4—Plantation cabin, St. Landry Parish, Louisiana (Photo—R. Koch).

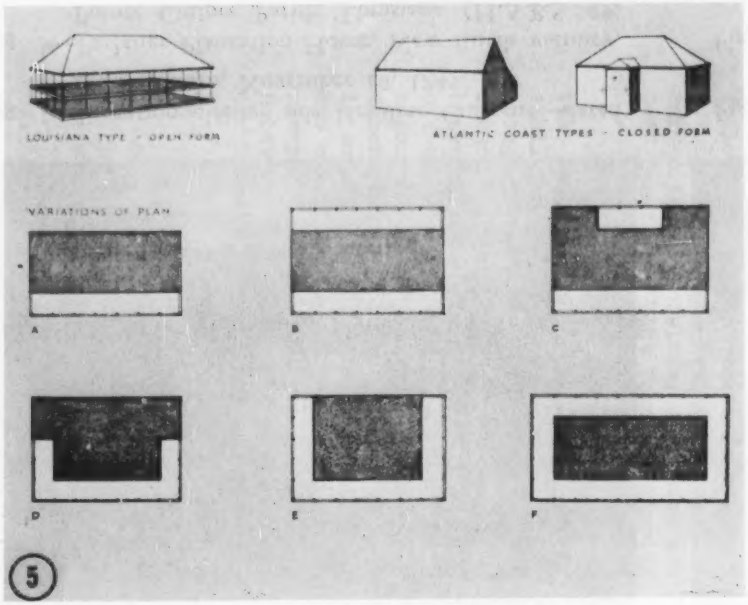


Fig. 5—Variations of the early Louisiana house plan.

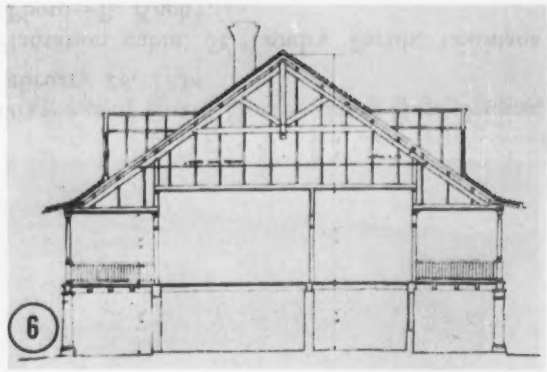


Fig. 6—Cross section, Home Place Plantation House, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana (H.A.B.S. 45).

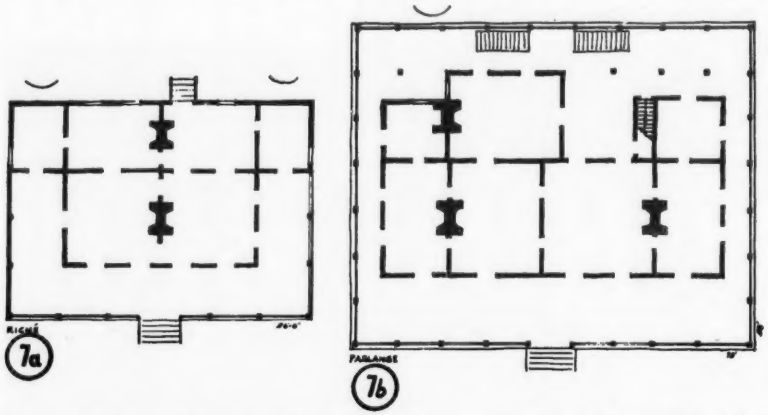


Fig. 7a—Plan of Riche Plantation House, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana (H.A.B.S.)

Fig. 7b—Plan of Parlange Plantation House, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana (H.A.B.S.)

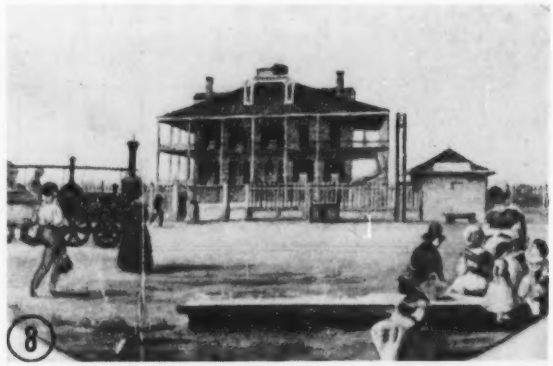


Fig. 8—Water color drawing of plantation house from map, 1834 (Courtesy of Mr. Samuel Wilson).

several rooms, and in many cases eliminating the need for interior corridors. Usually all the openings to the gallery were doors provided with shutters, thus giving a desirable inside-outside relationship of living spaces, and yet maintaining privacy with means for good ventilation. Before being "modernized", the stairways were always placed within the gallery. (c) The gallery is an integral part of the house; both floor and roof are continuations of the same elements of house; it is not "stuck on", but rather it is subtracted from or recessed within the total block. Note also in the cross section (Pl. IV, Fig. 6)3 that the main roof truss is carried on the slender gallery column. This is as important visually as it is structurally and functionally, for it gives a volumetric space quality to what would otherwise be a rather uninteresting form.

The continuity of gallery and main floor on the same horizontal plane, together with the uniform vertical bay system of skeleton construction, made possible an eighteenth century prototype of contemporary "open planning" with all the flexibility of modular design. The living floor could be subdivided at will and parts of the gallery could be enclosed as required. Some of the variations are shown in(Pl. IV, Fig. 5). See also plans in (Pl. IV, Figs. 6 and Pl. IV,7a and b). Note that the builders did not feel it necessary for walls always to be placed on center with either the columns or trusses. Also, the width of the galleries was not always uniform around the house.

A third feature of the Lower Mississippi regional house is the roof. Intense solar radiation and unusually heavy rainfall both required an efficiently weatherproofed and insulated protection from the elements overhead. The large pyramidal hip roofs in the original French buildings were nearly perfect for the purpose and were retained for larger houses. We comment on two points. (a) The huge umbrella-like form which shelters the whole house and galleries with no major breaks or intersecting gables. Thus, the effective roof plan is always a simple rectangle coinciding with the floor plan below. This made an extremely efficient method of collecting valuable rain water in cypress gutters which conducted it to the huge, silo-like cistern at the rear of the house. (b) Visually, the roof line establishes a third effective horizontal plane parallel to the two floors and defined by the gallery cornice. This emphasis of the horizontal plane accentuates the combined linear and volumetric quality which is visually akin to similar forms in contemporary architecture.

A word might be said about the materials and the way in which they were used. Soil conditions, together with the softness of local brick and mortar, made it necessary to build largely with wood. But in the two-story houses, brick was selected for the piers and walls of the ground floor, where it was essential because of the dampness. Even here, the bricks were stuccoed for greater protection. The round columns under the gallery were carefully constructed of triangular brick segments, and for masonry they were quite slender. The second floor, and everything above, was of wood - generally cypress. The details of woodwork, hand rail, mantels, and doorway indicate a fine adjustment of proportion, strength of material and purpose, especially in the delicately turned columns which support the main roof over the gallery. Traditional French and possibly Spanish building practices may have influenced certain general forms, but the unique character of the early Louisiana house demonstrates the strong regional flavor both in the specific architectural forms and in certain combinations of textural materials.

Louisiana (H.A.B.S.)

We have attempted to explain the practical and material reasons for some of the forms. It is obvious that people other than French would have built differently. Besides the appreciation of pleasant living, they brought to Louisiana an esthetic sensibility and a craftsmanship which must be considered along with their building traditions. What we have said of regional influence assumes, of course, the influence of natural forces merging with these other elements. In summing up the visual effect of the architecture we can only define the resultant general character. We find a strong unity in each structure, especially when compared with architecture in the east and north; a subordination of parts to the whole, with no projecting elements except the tiny dormers which serve principally as vents; the huge pyramidal roof which hovers over the total block of the house; the horizontal proportions which relate to the flat ground and contrast effectively with the irregular verticals in the trees; the dominant effect of volume, i. e., open form as against the mass or closed form. Contributing also to the overall unity is the delicacy and lightness of the details and supporting members. We find this quality in Louisiana houses continuing on through the Greek Revival and Victorian periods, as witnessed by the iron balconies in New Orleans, with their lacework pattern and slender supports. To illustrate that both the volumetric concept of the house and the lightness of supporting members were understood and appreciated in other times, we show a contemporary water color drawing [4] from the eighteen thirties (Pl. IV, Fig 8).

Tulane University
New Orleans, Louisiana

FOOTNOTES

[1] Both Figs. 1 and 2 (Pl. III) are reproduced from material brought to light by Samuel Wilson, architect and historian of New Orleans, working in Paris archives during the summer of 1938. He discovered over a hundred drawings of buildings made in Louisiana by the official French architects during the French Colonial period. Some of this material has already been published in a comprehensive article on the various convent buildings for the order of Ursuline Nuns in the Louisiana Historical Quarterly of July 1946.

[2] The author is indebted to Mr. Richard Koch, of New Orleans, for the photographs of Louisiana houses used in Figs. 3 and 4.

[3] The H. A. B. S. collection has good representative examples of all types referred to in this article, both in photographs and measured drawing. The drawings, Figs. 6 and 7, were made from H. A. B. S. material.

[4] Reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. Samuel Wilson.

OUTLINE FOR A HISTORY OF CITY PLANNING

From prehistory to the fall of the Roman Empire

II - West Asiatic and Egyptian

Giorgio Cavaglieri, A.I.A.

WEST ASIATIC

The archaelogical discoveries of the last century have unveiled many characteristics of the architecture of Western Asia.

Peoples of different races developed powerful empires in Western Asia from about 2000 B.C. to 323 B.C. and the remains of huge buildings attest the civilization attained. Bible descriptions and writings of Greek historians give an idea of the manifold manifestations of West Asiatic civilization, but the development of its city planning is still mostly a matter of speculation.

The buildings discovered by archaeological expeditions are mostly royal palaces, and while they may enlighten us on architectural construction and building materials, there are few elements from which the layout of the cities and the facilities offered the common man may be envisioned.

Historically, the Hittites, the Babylonians, the Assyrians and the Persians established their strongly autocratic kingdoms in today's Anatolia and Syria to the Persian Gulf, succeeding each other in leadership throughout seventeen centuries (Pl. V). For nearly five of these centuries (19th to 14th B.C.) however, the country was overrun by the Egyptians. They left no visible marks of their domination and nothing worth mentioning seems to have been done by the natives during this period.

Looking generally at the two periods preceding and following the Egyptian domination, the social and political organization does not seem to have undergone considerable change. But the city layouts, which we may retrace as characteristic of the two periods, show the change from the monocentric to the gridiron plan. Rather than a direct Egyptian influence, this could be the result of the resettling of the Assyrians as the dominating element in the country of their ancestors.

A bas-relief has been discovered at N i m r o d (Pl. VI) representing a city prior to the Egyptian conquest or during it. This is, by the way, probably the oldest known sample of planography.

The town, an Hittite or Assyrian one, is roughly of circular form and surrounded by a masonry wall with towers. The principal gate, probably the only one, leads to the king's residence. This royal residence, located approximately in the center of the circle, is shown as a much more conspicious building than the others; probably the only one built with masonry walls. The common people's houses are distributed around it. The curious sectional reproduction shows them as huts with roof and walls supported by wooden poles. Already some kind of industrial

work appears to have been done inside the buildings besides the main farming occupational activity, done entirely outside of the city.

Remains of another monocentric city, probably about the 16th century B. C., are at Z e n d j i r l i, Syria (Pl. VI), A double, perfectly circular, turreted masonry wall with a 720 feet diameter encloses the city. Three symmetrically spaced gates are opened in the walls. An inside irregular wall approximately oval, with only one gate, lined up with an outside one, enclosed the Acropolis where the residence of the king and the public buildings were located.

Both these samples present the basic characteristics of the radii - one - concentric - circles - layout.

While no attention should be paid to the lining up of the huts of Nimrod in parallel rows, (this was probably just a means of perspective drawing) a straight radial avenue is indicated from the gate to the civic center, by the gathering of people shown along this line. The importance of the king's retinue may suggest the existence of a meeting space in front of his house.

At Zendjirli the geometrical accuracy of the double walls and their gates show them as of later date than the Acropolis enclosure inside. Again, the lining up of the gates marks a radial avenue, while the continued existence of the inside wall after a much stronger protection had been built around the city, seems to indicate the different, more precious character of the buildings enclosed by it, thus, zoning the space covered by the city.

Many buildings may be studied in the period which starts with the decline of the Egyptian power in Western Asia and the resumption of power by the Assyrians; as the royal palaces of Sargon (8th century B.C.) and Esarhaddon (7th century B.C.), and the great square mounds on which they were built. Nothing remains of the gathering of buildings outside the royal residence, and it is difficult to draw conclusions from the plan of the cities they dominated. However, their location in relation to the city walls and the city walls themselves, or what remains of them, may give some suggestions on the matter.

K h o r s a b a d 's plan (Pl. VII) was a square measuring about one mile each way with one diagonal north-south. In approximately the center of the northwestern wall was a gap in which was situated the mound in which Sargon's palace stood. The mound was raised about 30 feet and was about 650 feet square, with a lower mound in front about 300 feet wide and 1300 feet long. On the lower mound were situated the great portals of the palace, and the residence of the guards and the inferior officers. The palaces were made up of a number of rectangular rooms surrounding rectangular and square courtyards.

It is hard to guess how the common people's residences compared with this tremendous gathering of important buildings. Although the dominant location marks the royal palaces as an important point in the life of the community, they may scarcely be classified as civic centers.

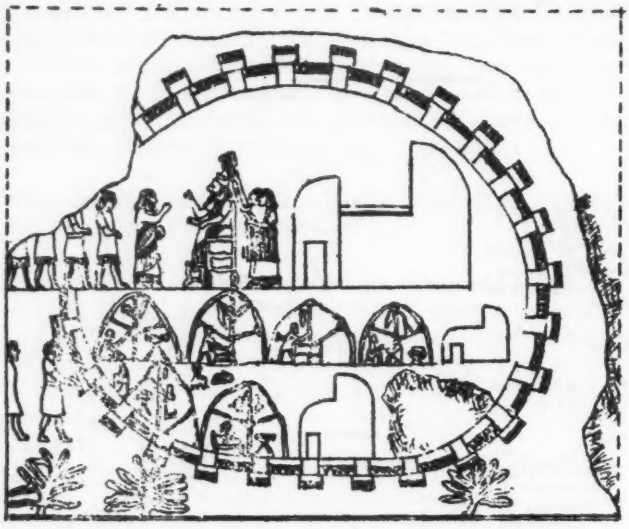
The number of axes and views and perspectives, at right angles to each other which were used in this architectural composition and the general location and shape of the buildings, the mounds, and the whole city, may suggest that Khorsabad was generally built with a gridiron plan and that

PLATE V

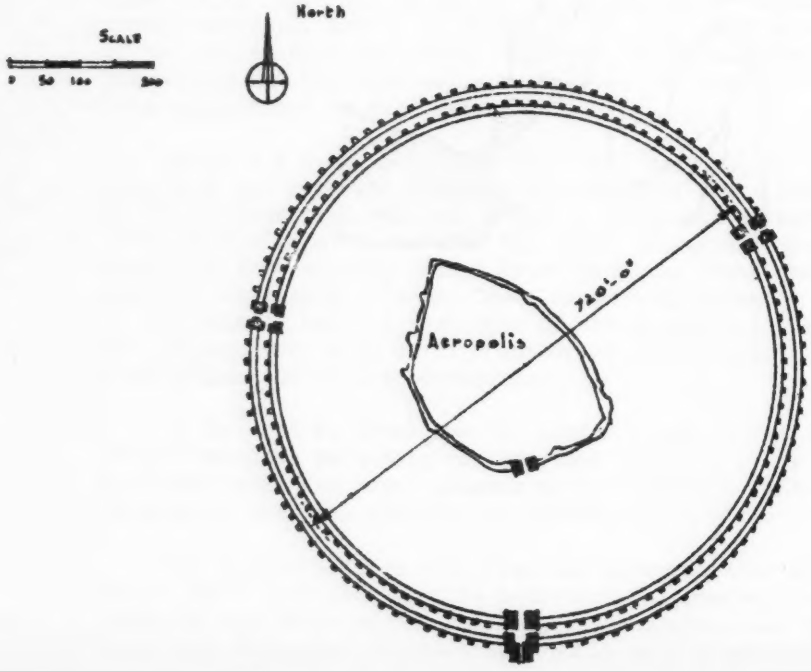
The Cradle Of The Earliest White Civilization

PLATE VI

ASSYRIAN OR HITTITE CITY FROM A BAS RELIEF OF NIMROD (SYRIA)

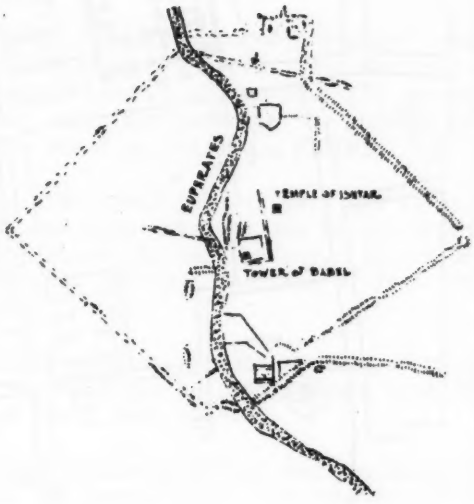


ZENDJIRLI, HITTITE CITY (SYRIA)

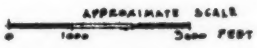


BABYLON

PLATE VII

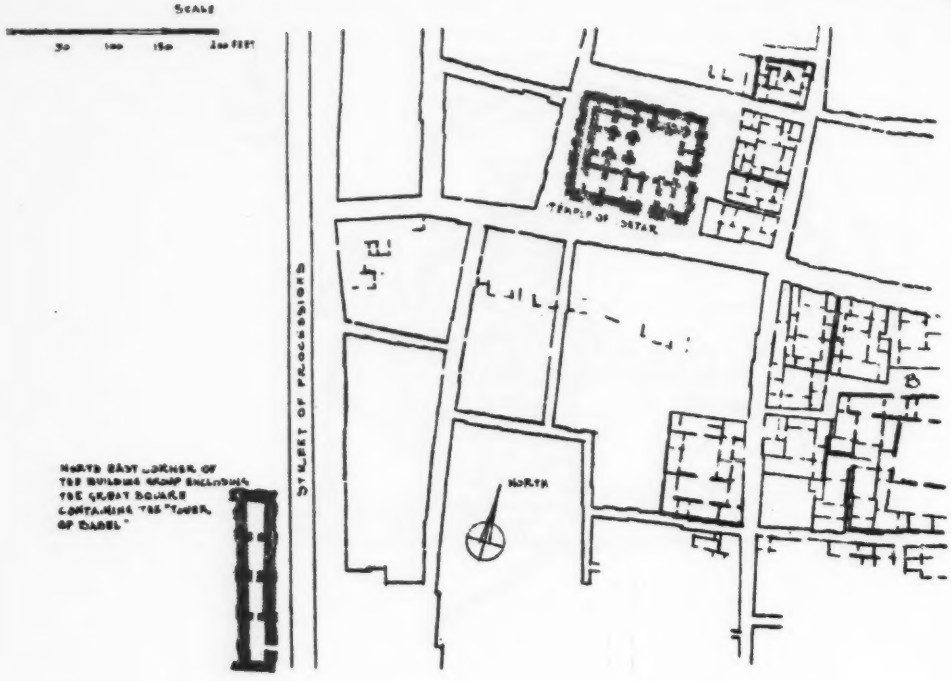


KHORSABAD

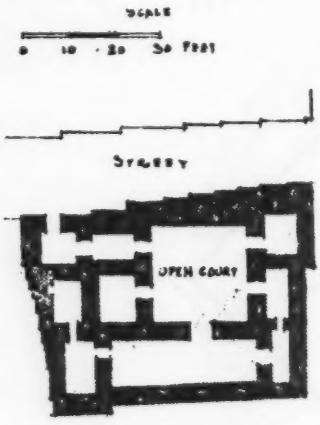


BABYLON

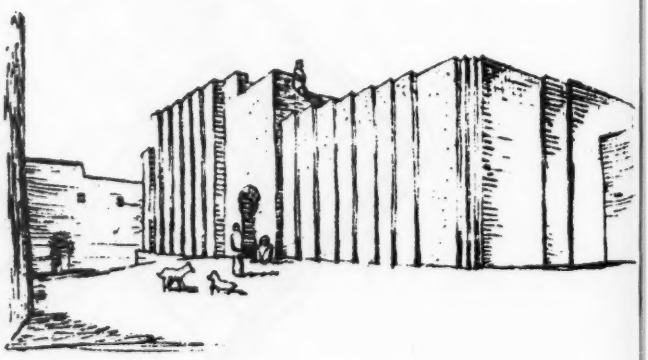
PLATE VIII


Scale
50 100 150 200 FEET
STREET OF PROCESSIONS
TEMPLE OF BEL
NORTH
NORTH EAST CORNER OF THE BUILDING GROUP ENCLOSING THE GREAT SQUARE CONTAINING THE "TOWER OF BABEL"

PLAN OF HOUSE A (See above)



VIEW OF STREET B (RESTORATION)



at least one main avenue enjoyed the view of the dominating royal palace at its end.

The Assyrian city of B a b y l o n (Pl. VII, VIII) was built and rebuilt from the 15th down to the 5th century B.C. What remains today is probably mostly a remanant of Nebuchadnezzar's building of the 6th century.

According to Herodotus the city covered a regular square of about five thousand yards each way with the broad river Euphrates flowing along a north-south diagonal through its midst. The general orientation is the same as Khorsabad. This may indicate the general acceptance of some principles, probably based on religious beliefs, for the main layout.

However, in Babylon, the royal palaces were not at one side of the city, but in its midst. How much this was due to the attractiveness of the sections close to the river, is hard to say. We are told that the city was surrounded by a wall 350 feet high and 87 feet thick with one hundred gates of brass.

The layout was a gridiron with streets running at right angles and generally very narrow. The north-south streets were about 20-25 feet wide, the east-west 10-15 feet wide.

The wall construction of the buildings was peculiar; the outside surface of the walls was not smooth along the building line, but of a saw-tooth pattern.

At least one street had been given a definite character of importance; the Procession Street, probably elevated, paved and some 60-70 feet wide. It ran north-south nearing the king's palace, the public buildings and the temples. But this approach to the huge temple of Ishtar had not been widened out for obtaining a view of it or conveying the people to it.

Thus the principle of hierarchy of streets although outlined, was not entirely understood.

The houses were built around an open court with few windows and small rooms. Terraces over the roofs seemed to have provided the wide fame of the hanging gardens and the tales of marvelous beauties.

The Persians succeeded to the art as well as to the empire of the Babylonians. They developed and changed many of the West Asiatic architectural elements, among which it may be remembered, was the skillful use of flights of steps. The royal palaces, at P a s s a r g a d a e and P e r s e p o l i s, seem to have slowly shifted from the character of residences to that of religious buildings, thus emphasizing their value as civic center for the city. The great halls were certainly built for huge throngs of people and striking pageants and ceremonies.

Whatever the character of these religious gatherings the Persians seem to have used to the utmost "grand scale" effects. Architectural axes and views were probably, considered at least in the approach to the palaces.

From this one may guess that the Persians made a distinction in street importance to a greater extent than The Babylonians.

EGYPTIAN

The history of the Egyptians goes back an unknown number of years before the Roman conquest.. Everybody knows that they built the Pyramids, the oldest of all architectural objects "either in existence or of which any record or description whatever is preserved."[1] Pyramids were the tombs of the kings of a powerful empire which had flourished and fully developed in the valley of the Nile, 25 or 30 centuries B.C. and which came to an end with the death of Cleopatra (30 B.C.) and the absorption of Egypt into the Roman Empire. During this very long period of time a break in the continuity of the Egyptian organization is recorded as the occupation by the Shepherd Kings, who submerged for a few centuries (probably from the 20th to the 18th B.C.) the political power of the Pharaohs. After the original line was restored, the center of the Egyptian civilization which had been in Lower Egypt, at Memphis, shifted to Upper Egypt to Thebes.

It is in this second epoch that most of the great temples were built. From them and the tombs of the same period comes most of the information which attests the extremely high degree of civilization reached in the valley of the Nile in the earliest times.

During the twenty-five centuries, more or less, in which this civilization flourished, from the Pyramids to Alexander the Great, no outside influence seems to have played any part in its development, and the examples left may be looked upon as "a style absolutely independent of all previous effort of human art either in Egypt itself or in any contemporary nation." [2]

A second interruption of the Egyptian political power came with foreign invasions which culminated with the Persian invasion of Cambyses (6th century B.C.). Again however, the influence of the conquerors seems to have been nonexistant from a cultural point of view. When, after Alexander the Great (323 B.C.), the Ptolemies reestablished the Egyptian grandeur, Egyptian art and architecture continued along much the same line as before. Alexandria itself seems to have been an isolated seed of Greek influence which developed and gave its fruits mostly locally until the Roman occupation.

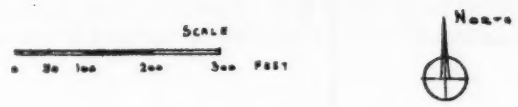
Chronologically therefore, the architecture and all manifestations of Egyptian civilization go farther back without interruption, than the history of any other race or part of the occidental world.

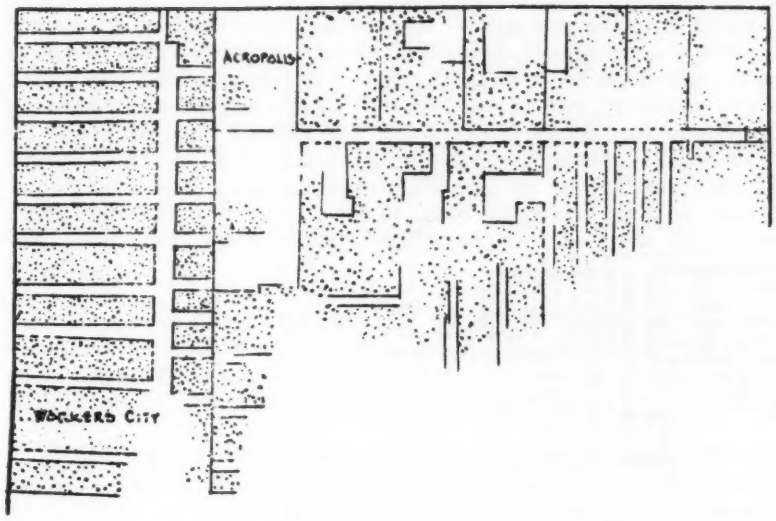
Their cities, being older than the West Asiatic ones, should have come first in this outline. But while the gathering of West Asiatic peoples into communities was traceable back to forms and manifestations close to prehistory, the oldest forms of Egyptian civilization are at their beginning nearly as perfect as in any later elaboration. In the historical progress of mankind the Egyptians represent a more developed stage than their contemporaries or later races.

The excellence of the Egyptians in mathematical study and building ability, 2500 or 3000 B.C. whatever the building date of the Pyramids may be, is a matter for treatment in a history of science or architecture. It

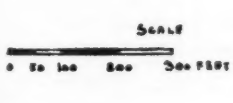
KAHUN

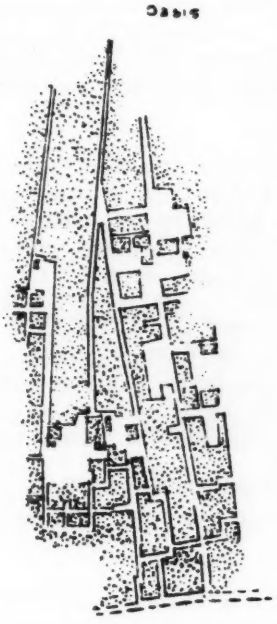
PLATE IX





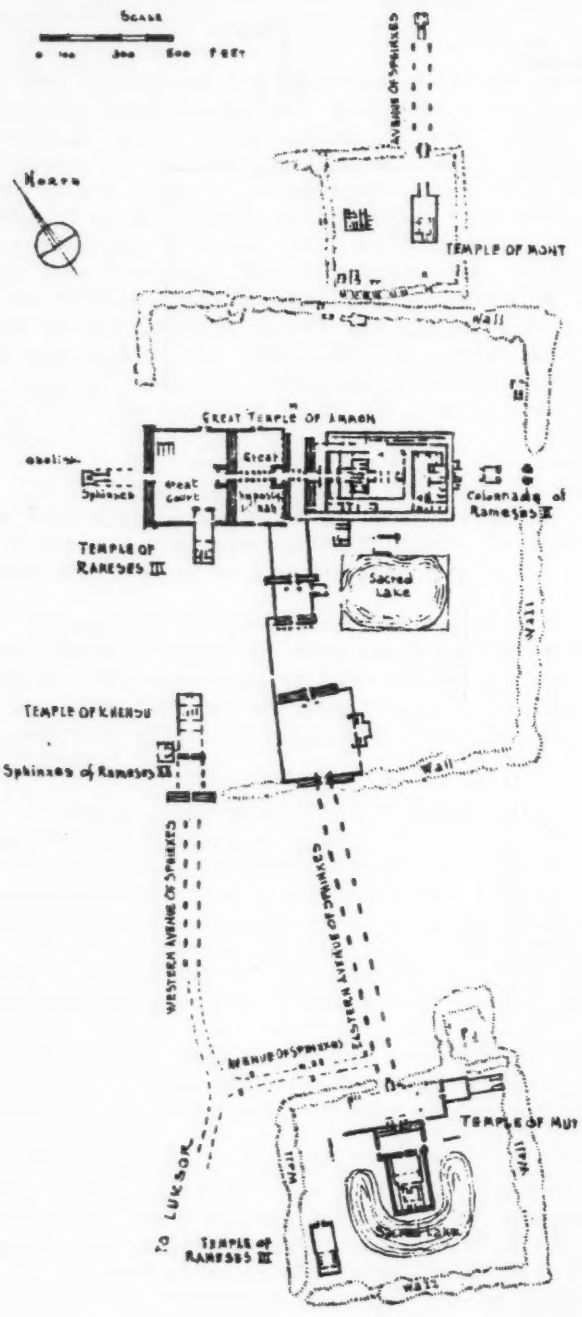
TEBTUNIS (OASIS OF FAYUM)





KARNAK (THEBES)

PLATE X



suggest however, that such a people may have considered with a very sophisticated mind such different problems as the planning and building of their cities.

Of the first ten dynasties of Egyptian kings the best known remains are their fifty Pyramids or tombs with small contemporary sepulchers and monuments of funerary character. Their grouping in comparatively small areas without remains of any different character suggests that the space they were built upon was a zone dedicated exclusively to buildings for the preservation of the dead. Moreover, all the Pryamids are on the left bank of the Nile just beyond the cultivated ground and on the edge of the desert. If we consider that the regular yearly flooding of the river Nile was used to fertilize the agricultural ground, we may assume that the common people's city was entirely on the other side of the river. A better zoning subdivision could have hardly been developed between the Necroplis and the city itself.

Egyptian knowledge and use of the main principles of city planning as far back as 2500 B.C. are seen in the plan of the small city of K a h u n (Pl. IX). It was probably built to house the people working for the construction of one of the Pyramids, fairly close to the job.

All the elements show a neatly designed plan. The arrangement is nowhere left to chance, but clearly thought of before construction. The whole city is inside a protected wall enclosing a rectangle of about 950 by 1200 feet. A zone on the west side is separated from the rest of the city by a wall. Inside this section a main street running north-south and secondary streets at right angles to it, subdivided the space in small plots, probably used for the residences oi slave labor. On the other side of the wall a main street approximately 20 feet wide, runs east-west from the main city gate to the Acropolis, or civic center. Buildings of larger size than the ones on the west section line both sides of this street. These buildings, with inside courts and gardens, were the residences of people of better means.

Another interesting city is T e b t u n i s (Pl. IX) which flourished about 1800 B. C. The town grew at the edge of the oasis of Fayum at the meeting place of caravan roads. No evidence appears in this of a plan well organized and designed before construction. There is scarcely any hierarchy of streets and the public buildings are not easy to distinguish in the general layout. Very narrow north-south avenues cross few east-west streets.

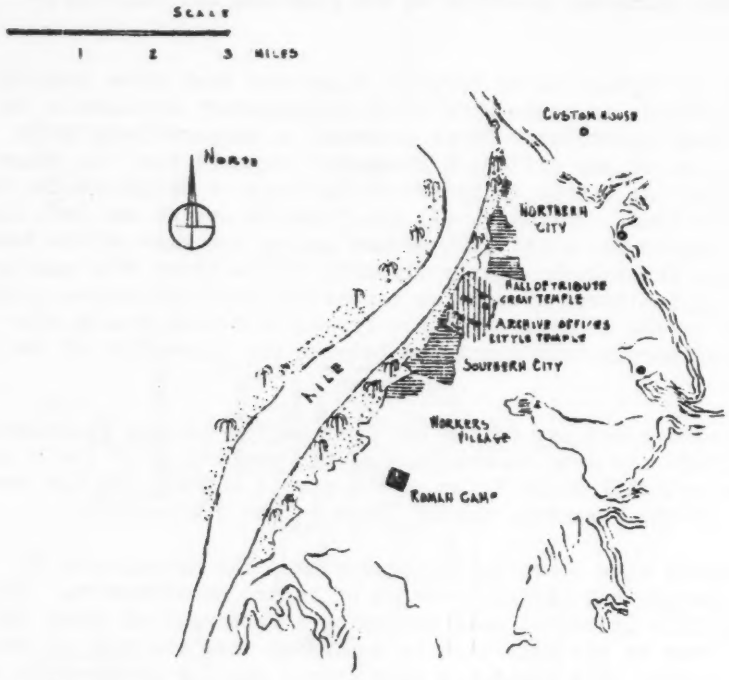
If we think however, of the definitely minor importance of the town, which was probably just the natural consequence of traffic needs, and of the windy nature of its site, it is amazing to find with what skill the east-west bound streets were staggered for defense against the prevailing winds.

The fact of founding a city for the purely economical reason of traffic convenience is itself proof of a well developed and organized system of trade and commerce.

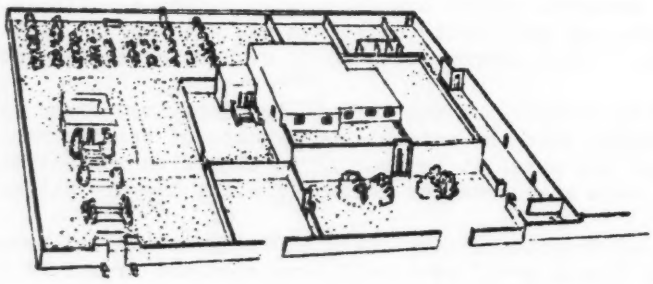
The great group of temples at K a r n a k (Pl. X), near Thebes, was built by the Pharaohs of the so called New Empire between 1800 and 1000 B.C.

TELL EL AMARNA

PLATE XI



HOUSE AT TELL EL AMARNA (RESTORATION)



This huge religious center was developed north-east of the city, on ground which had certainly been reserved for the purpose.

The Egyptian religion did not consider the temple as a place of worship for the people, but as the place for religious ceremonies, close to the house of the gods, and to which only special groups were admitted. The common people gathered outside the temples or in enclosed courtyards.

On special occasions particular throngs must have come to the religious zone from avenues of approach of considerable size. Some of them are over sixty feet wide and marvelously decorated by flanking rows of sphinxes. The desire of impressing the crowd with the king's power gave reason to the architectural greatness of the pylons, the succession of forecourts, colonnades and halls. Sacred lakes of impressive aesthetic and romantic effect were placed at the end of long views.

If this group of temples was the civic and religious center of the capital of a great empire, certainly a more impressive one was seldom built in later centuries.

The city of T e l l - E l - A m a r n a (Pl. XI), which flourished under the Theban dynasties, about 1400-1300 B.C., gives a more complete picture of Egyptian city planning.

Built on the right bank of the Nile and almost enclosed between the cultivated ground, which was annually flooded, and the desert, Tell-El-Amarna took the shape of an almost lineal city. A main street, as wide as 90 feet, ran approximately north-south. This street went through a zone of public buildings and connected two main residential sections to its north and south.

Another distinctly detached zone about one mile away from the civic center, shows the remnant of residences of small size, reserved to workmen or slave laborers. This is probably the earliest sample of a suburban community.

The average wealthy citizen of Tell-El-Amarna lived in a good house enclosing in its premises a garden, terraces, and a small chapel or family temple.

Generally speaking, some of the civic facilities which Tell-El-Amarna offered its citizens were hardly inferior to the ones of most any metropolis of today.

This fourteen centuries before Jesus Christ!

New York City

(To be concluded in the next issue)

APPENDIX

COMPARATIVE CHARACTERS OF WEST ASIATIC AND EGYPTIAN CITY PLANNING

WEST ASIATIC 2000 B. C. - 323 B.C.	EGYPTIAN 2000 B. C. - 30 B. C.

Social and political

The Western Asiatic kingdoms controlled larger or smaller sections of Western Asia under the leadership of one or the other of the Western Asiatic peoples. Hittites, Babylonians, Assyrians and Persians succeeded each other and formed alternatively extensive empires. However, their strongly autocratic central organization does not seem to have had at all times powerful influence in all the territory it controlled. The various cities flourished independently in the provinces, maintaining and stressing the character of independent fortresses notwithstanding their political dependency from the capital.

The Egyptian kingdom was always highly centralized. Whether or not the Pharaohs controlled territory outside the Nile valley, in Egypt proper the urban development had the character of a statewide program.

Although signs of fortified walls are left in the Egyptian cities, their main character is not entirely based on defense principles. Sometimes it is dubious if there were walls protecting the city or even part of it. The walls enclosing religious zones, as at Karnak, were more a screen or limit mark than a military protection.

General layout

The general layout of the oldest cities is a round monocentric one, forerunner of the radii-and-concentric-circles-layout.

The gridiron scheme appears after a period of foreign occupation, whether due to foreign influence (Egyptian) , or derived from needs of subdivision of the ground. Orientation seems to have been an influencing factor in the second period, after the Egyptian occupation; probably astronomic considerations of religious origin dictated the commonly adopted general shape of the city (Khorsabad, Babylon).

The gridiron plan, with more or less regularity, was adopted from earliest times.

The understanding of main city planning problems was deeply rooted in Egyptian civilization and the foreign occupation of a people of inferior culture did not affect or change their aplication. Only Greek invasion brought new elements which, however, were very slowly absorbed. Orientation was considered in connection with geographical elements more than religious principles. (Tell-El-Arana, Tebtunis.)

Zoning

Separation of sections of the city for special purposes seems to have been limited to a distinction between the palaces of the king and his court, and the remainder of the town.

Religious buildings outside the royal district, as Babylon's temple of Ishtar, are in the midst of the city. The remains or at least grouped in separate zones

Separation of sections of the city according to use and to the occupation of the inhabitants was an old Egyptian practice.

Workmen's residences, public buildings, and, above all, the cities of the dead, are carefully planned as a unit,

are, however, too few to advance a definite opinion on the matter.

of the city.

Hierarchy of streets

In the oldest cities, before the Egyptian occupation, the main street is marked by the general location of buildings and city gates within the monocentric layout. With the adoption of the gridiron plan, the streets of outstanding importance for traffic or religious ceremonies, as Babylon's Procession Street, were built with larger sizes. Their relation to the buildings they serve is, however, often confused.

Distinction between streets according to their utilization is expressed by their size in the oldest Egyptian cities, and more and more in the examples built in later times. Their relation to the important buildings is carefully emphasized with enrichment and decoration of architectural value (Sphinx Avenues at Karnak) as well as with the aligning of the main building entrance with the axis of the street.

Architectural effects

The architecture developed by the West Asiatic peoples demonstrates a high understanding of building materials and structural principles. The grouping of buildings belonging to the same architectural unit created powerful aesthetic effects. Courtyards, towers, gates, were designed with a feeling for perspective and views.

But little is left to judge of the effect of the huge masses of the royal palaces of the Assyrians and the Persians on the city layout.

The building principles of Egyptian architecture were mostly limited to a well perfected stone architecture, and nothing seems to have been studied and developed, outside the main post-and-lintel principle.

However, the buildings belonging to the same large zone were planned in relation to each other and to the street layout. The design of a temple did not start at its building line, but the approach to it is part of the plan. The Sphinx Avenues outside, the Holy Lakes within the religious sections, are parts of the same unit, carefully designed with main secondary axis. A building incorporated centuries later into a well designed zone, is also planned and placed in strict relationship to the view and axis of existing buildings.

Expansion of the cities and regional planning

No provision appears to have been made for the growth of the population.

In the oldest monocentric layouts the added residences were included in new walls, as in Zendjirli.

Babylon also was probably walled many times before reaching the walls of which we have remains, dimensions and layout.

The planning of community facilities did not go outside the estab-

While there is no way of closely checking how the main Egyptian cities have developed under the impulse of growing population, the careful zoning suggests that the original layouts left ample room for expansion within the zones.

This need had certainly been considered when the first Pyramid was built in the Necropolis of Memphis.

Moreover, the existence of workmen's

lished cities. Each of them controlled an agricultural territory outside its walls which was cultivated for its needs and crossed only by the main roads of intercity traffic. These were designed according to geographical conditions.

suburban centers, as at Tell-El-Amarna, suggests that when, for a particular reason, a large number of people was brought to the city, provisions were made to take care of them as a whole. This may have happened when a considerable number of prisoners of war increased the slave labor supply source of the city.

The geography of the Egyptian kingdom, which controlled a stretch of land all along one line, the Nile, did not call for a road scheme to embrace the entire kingdom. Small centers, as Tebtunis, appearing at points of special traffic interest were probably laid out according to very general principles in the needed location.

FOOTNOTES

1. J. Fergusson, The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture ed. Murray, London, 1859, Book 5, Chapt. 1. p. 215. This definition assumes the "terramarae" too poorly constructed to be considered an "architectural object".

2. ibid

The Books of Peter Nicholson.

Donald Macdonald - Millar

Talbot Hamlin in his book "Greek Revival Architecture in America", says, "When the Greek Revival in America had at last become general, information about Greek forms flooded the country through the illustrations of many books besides Stuart and Revett - especially the books of Peter Nicholson" - - - Haviland in 1837 improved and enlarged Biddle's "The Young Carpenter's Assistant", but Hills, the great eclectic, lifted his designs from everywhere, pillaging Lafever's ideas as diligently as he did Nicholson's - - - The fact seems well established that, in building design as a whole the Nicholson books had but slight influence - - - The same seems to have been true of the much more original designs published in the various books of Sir John Soane."

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If you seek to build a house
In the Neo-Grecian Style,
With "Venetian" doors and windows,
A superbly classic pile -
You will find the Why and Wherefore,
The Lay-out and the How
In the books once used by workmen
To bring the Past up to the Now -
The Books of Peter Nicholson.

To decorate your facades with columns four or six.
Whether stood in rows or placed in antae:
Calculate the pediment; estimate diameters:
The result will be a temple, not a shanty.
You can find originals in Stuart and Revett;
You can read the history in Talbot Hamlin's tome;
But for Beauty that was Greece
And stucco'd Grandeur that was Rome -
The Books of Peter Nicholson.

The men that followed Strickland,
Designers like Latrobe,
They ransacked the books of classics,
And with paitence like to Job
Sat down with pen and pencil,
With tee-square and with chalk
For designs unique and elegant
At copying did not balk -
The Books of Peter Nicholson.

Biddle helped young carpenters,
Lafever did the same;
Chester Hills tried Gothis
As a means to fame;
For "Hills, the great eclectic",
Snatched designs from everywhere,
But when he wanted mantels
Or designed an oval stair -
The Books of Peter Nicholson.

Then Praise to Peter Nicholson,
The man that others followed:
His learning helped the country
And his teachings thousands swallowed.
He gave designs to Ashur Benjamin,
He was like to Sir John Soane:
He only had "slight influence"
And is renouned for this alone --
The Books of Peter Nicholson.

New York City

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BOOK REVIEWS

Annapolis Houses - 1700-1775. By Deering Davis, with Foreword by Joseph Mullen. Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1947. 124p. illus.

The attention given to early Colonial Williamsburg in the last fifteen years has tended to overshadow this adjacent and important later Colonial town, which has a number of houses boasting an almost perfect state of preservation. These Annapolis houses are as outstanding examples of the late Colonial, as the restored Williamsburg buildings are representative of the best of the southern early Colonial style.

It is high time that Annapolis be brought out of the shadow of Williamsburg, but is unfortunate that this volume is not as comprehensive or as well illustrated as it might have been, to achieve this end.

The author indicates that the publication of this work is the result of two objectives - first, to help stem the tide of the expanding Naval Academy in the direction of some of the old houses and second, to recruit further interest in a restoration movement in the town, which has been Maryland's capital since 1695.

Both of these objectives are laudable, and it is hoped that this volume will in some measure help to achieve them. The text is not extensive but is justified if only for the five pages devoted to that important but not well enough known late Colonial designer, William Buckland. Documentation on him is scarce, but we know enough about him and some of his works, such as the Hammond-Harwood house, to justify labelling him one of the most sophisticated designers of the late Colonial period. Indeed, his five part house in Annapolis might well be called the ultimate development of the Georgian style in the colonies. We should eventually hope to know more about Buckland, and his work, but the attribution of examples to him on circumstantial or stylistic evidence, as sometimes indicated in this volume, should await the appearance of further documentation.

The illustrations are, unfortunately, from only a few sources, and some of them poor in quality. Those copied from the pages of the Monograph Series were considered quite adequate upon their appearance in that admirable series in 1929, but now, almost a quarter of a century later, one would have hoped that later and better photographs would have been found for reproduction here.

The book is a definite contribution to the literature on Annapolis and its houses, but its important buildings deserve eventually, a more adequate treatment.

Frank Roos
University of Illinois

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

REGARDING THE TERRAMARE SETTLEMENTS

Exception to Giorgio Cavaglieri's use of the terramare, and particularly Castellazzo, as evidence for the grid-pattern town came from two members. A letter from Elbert Peets expresses his deep interest in Dr. Cavaglieri's "Outlines", and on the terramare questions calls attention to two excellent articles by Dan Stanislawski dealing with the grid-pattern plan. These are: The Origin and Spread of the Grid-Pattern Town in The Geographical Review v. 36 pp. 105-120 Jan. 1946; Early Spanish Town Planning in the New World in the same publication v. 37 pp. 94-105 Jan. 1947. George Hanfmann's letter follows.

"NOT WITHOUT EQUAL"

To the Editor of JSAH:

I have read with great interest the first instalment of Giorgio Cavaglieri's Outline for a History of City Planning. This article abounds in suggestive observations on a topic often neglected in histories of ancient architecture. I am much perturbed, however, by the appearance on pp. 33 f, pl. VII, of the plan of the terramara of Castellazzo and by the claim (advanced on the basis of this plan) that "the terramare influence in the history of city planning for centuries to come is without equal". This statement perpetuates an inveterate error. Recent scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that Pigorini's plan of Castellazzo is largely a figment of imagination. Säflund (Le Terremare, Lund, 1939) has pointed out that no scientific excavation of a terramare settlement ever yielded any settlement resembling Pigorini's plan. Pigorini elicited this reconstructed plan from an utterly disturbed site, because he held the pre-conceived notion that the terramare settlements resembled Roman camps. Actually, the only well-attested feature of the terramare settlements is an irregularly shaped open space in the center of the village. As far as I can see, all Bronze Age villages of Northern and Central Italy - Lake Dwellings (which, incidentally, are something quite different from Terramare), Terramare, and the villages of "Appenine" culture reflect the primitive Prehistoric plan, in which "the huts of common people are distributed without any particular order or scheme".

Until we know more than we do now, it will be well to release the Terramare people from the burden of initiating the gridiron plan. A settlement on the evidence appears in American Journal of Archaeology, XLV, 1941, pp. 308 ff.

George M. A. Hanfmann

Harvard University

NEWS ITEMS

LEWIS MUMFORD AWARDED HOWARD MEMORIAL MEDAL

At a luncheon held in London on June 27, 1946, Lewis Mumford was awarded the Howard Memorial Medal by the President of the Town and Country Planning Association. This was the fifth presentation of the Medal which was inaugurated

by the Association in 1938 in commemoration of the work of Sir Ebenezer Howard.

OBERLIN SYMPOSIUM ON MEDIAEVAL ARCHITECTURE

On October 16, 17, 1948, a Symposium on Mediaeval Architecture was held by the Department of Find Arts, at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, at which the following papers were presented:

Paul Underwood, Dumbarton Oaks. Justinian's Church of the Holy Apostles: A Reconstruction of Architecture by means of Texts.

Kenneth Conant, Harvard University. The Church Scheme with two Axial Towers.

Sumner McK. Crosby, Yale University. Early Gothic Architecture: New problems as a result of the St. Denis Excavations.

Carl Hersey, University of Rochester. The Reconstruction of the Third Abbey Church of St. Martin at Tours.

Robert Van Nice, Boston, Massachusetts. A Structural Survey of the Church of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF ARCHITECTURE IN ENGLAND

The fourth annual report of the National Buildings Record in England states that The Courtauld Institute of Art has placed its collection of approximately 100,000 photographs of English architecture on indefinite loan with the National Buildings Record. With those of the Record the collection totals some 247,000 (Jan. 1946) and is filed at All Souls College, Oxford.

(The Architects' Journal 103:1:3 Jan 3, 1946)

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MEXICO, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, YUCATAN

David D. Red, A.I.A. of the University of Houston has notified the JOURNAL that he has almost three hundred photographs of churches in Mexico and Guatamela and of Maya ruins in Guatamala, Honduras, and Yucatan. These were taken in connection with an Edward Langley Scholarship in 1942 and may be of special interest to individuals or institutions seeking illustrative material.

ELIZABETH WILDER IN MEXICO

Elizabeth Wilder is in Mexico for the current year and is completing a short popular book on Mexican Sculpture which is to be published by the Harvard Press.

EXCHANGE PROFESSORSHIP IN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

News has come that Frederick Nichols (P.O. Box 18, Honolulu 10, Territory of Hawaii) would like to spend 1949-50 on the mainland in order to complete his study on the Gothic Revival. The person exchanging with him would be responsible for first and second year design, one course in history of architecture and a course in shades and shadows.

SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS MEETING IN BALTIMORE - JANUARY 28, 1949

A meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, on January 28, in conjunction with the meeting of the College Art Association (Jan. 27, 28, 29). The program will deal with the architecture of the last third of the nineteenth century and will probably include four papers with considerable time allowed for discussion.

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John G. Replinger
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Archs J - Architects' Journal London, published 45 The Ave. Cheam, Surrey, Eng. (w)
Bost Soc - Bostonian Society. Boston, Mass. Proceedings
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Huntington Lib Q - Huntington Library Quarterly. San Marino, Cal.
Indiana Mag Hist - Indiana Magazine of History. Published by the Indiana Historical Society. Indianapolis, Ind. (q)
J Ill S Hist Soc - Journal Illinois State Historical Society. Springfield, Ill. (m-9)
L'Am de L'Art - L'Amour de L'Art (formerly Promethee) Paris (m)
Maryland Hist Mag - Maryland Historical Magazine. Baltimore, Md. (q)
Ohio Archaeol & Hist Q - Ohio (State) Archaeological and Historical Quarterly. Columbus, O.
Roy Arch Inst Canada J - Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal. Toronto (m)
Va Mag Hist - Virginia Magazine of History and Biography published by the Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, Va. (q)
Wis Mag Hist - Wisconsin Magazine of History, published by the State Historical Society (q)

Note on arrangement

Inasmuch as most JOURNAL readers are familiar with the Art Index, the JOURNAL Bibliography is designed to supplement the Art Index and approximately the same arrangement and abbreviations are used. Authors and subjects are arranged in one alphabetical file and under these, titles are filed by the first word (initial articles being disregarded). Subdivisions of a subject are arranged alphabetically or chronologically under the subject, country subdivisions following the form subdivisions. For some subjects arrangement has been by town or locality

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AGNEW, Harvey
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Aircraft assembly hall Eric Ross, architect il Archs J 104:431-434 D 12 '46
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London airport Designed by H. J. Coates, E. R. Morgan and F. W. Smith il Archs J 101:283 Ap 12 '45

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ALVESTON HOUSE, Warwickshire

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AMPHITHEATRE

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The Somerset giants Harwood Steele il Country L Lond 99:66-68 Ja 11 '46

United States

Rock River's indians Paul H Nesbitt Wis Mag Hist 28:416-421 Je '45

ARCHITECT

The architect and the post-war world Ralph Walker Roy Arch Inst Canada J 23:21-25 F '46

ARCHITECTS

The case of Sir Christopher Wren John Summerson il Country L Lond 97:1130-1131 Je 29 '45

White of Worcester Marcus Whiffen il Country L Lond 98:1002-1005 D 7 '45

William Buckland, architect of Virginia and Maryland Rosamond R. Beirne il Maryland Hist Mag 41:199-218 S '46

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Denmark

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School in standard bay units. Designed by C. G. Stillman il Archs J 101:421-427 Je 7 '45
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Broadcasting House, Oslo. Designed by Nils Holter il Archs. J 103: 236-238 Mr 21 '46

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Dixton Manor, Gloucestershire 1, 11 Arthur Oswald il Country L. Lond 99:762-765; 808-811 Ap 26 and May 3 '46

The Elizabethan House, Plymouth H. R. Hicks il Country L. Lond 99:214-215 F 1 '46

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The future of great country houses 1 Marchioness of Exeter il Country L. Lond 98: 812-814 N 9 '45

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A small house in St. James's Christopher Hussey il Country L. Lond 98:772-775 N 2 '45

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Emilio Harth-terre Apuntaciones a un Plan Organico para la Ciudad de Lima.
Contricucion al VI Congreso Panamericano de Arquitectos. Lima 1947
Por una Arquitectura Contemporanea que sea Nuestra.
Contribucion al VI Congreso Panamericano de Arquitectos. Lima 1947

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Donald Macdonald-Millar is Vicar of St. Andrew's Church in New York City. He has been especially interested in the architecture of Virginia and has done some fine measured drawings of Virginia houses.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

NEWARK, N.J.

Miss Ione Sonn is gathering material on the architecture of the city of Newark prior to 1880 and will appreciate such suggestions and references as SAH members may advance.

OBERLIN COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS.

Miss Marian Card is making a study of the church architecture of New Jersey from the earliest settlement through the Early Republican period. She is working under the supervision of Clarence Ward.

Mrs Jean Reftsman France is investigating the Early Churches of the Western Reserve also under the supervision of Mr. Ward.